E.13.43

THE FUNDAMENTALS OF THE PROTESTANT RELIGION

Asserted By

REASON

As well as

SCRIPTURE.

BIBL. CANT.

Written in *French* by the Famous

MONSIEUR de GOMBAUD,

Made *English* by *SIDNEY LODGE.*

To which is added, his Letters to

MONSIEUR de MILITIERE,

And other Personages of the *French*-Court, upon the same Subject.

LONDON,

Printed for *W. C. M. G.* and *W. H.* and sold by *W. Davis* in *Amen-Corner*.

MDCLXXXII.

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401:03

To the Right Honourable,

BRIDGET

COUNTESS OF

PLYMOUTH.

Madam,

DEdications are uſually made to Perſons of your Ladiſhip's high Character, as marks of Gratitude, or Reſpect due to 'em : This of mine is of that nature, there being no one to whom I owe more Acknowledgments, or a greater Honour than to your Ladiſhip. Romances *and* Playes *are generally ſuch Books, whoſe Fronts are honour'd with Names of your Ladiſhip's Sex; but I have made choice of this Serious and Weighty Subject, as believing it moſt ſuitable to your Inclinations. The Matter of it is* Grave *and* Solid, *but withal* Delightful, *it being writ in an Eloquent, and yet unaffected* Style; *I have endea-*

vour'd to make it not leſs ſo in our own Tongue. *If your Honour finds any Satisfaction in the reading of it, I ſhall believe the Pains I have taken in it ſufficiently requited; and nothing will more encourage me to Attempts of the like nature, than your Ladiſhip's Approbation of this. Becauſe ſuch Applications as theſe, if tedious, are preſumptive, I'll only beg leave humbly to aſſure Your Ladiſhip, that I am,*

Madam,

Your Honour's

moſt Obliged, and

moſt Humble Servant,

SIDNEY LODGE.

TO

TO THE
READER.

THE Preface tranſlated out of *French* gives you a ſhort account of the LIFE of the celebrated Author: I intend by this only to let you know, that the enſuing Diſcourſe is ſo Rational, Pithy, and full of Senſe, that it will ſufficiently recommend it ſelf, and withall, to beg you to read it with a due Attention and Candour. For my own part, I dare confidently ſay, I have been very faithful to the Original (having taken no more liberty than what a Tranſlator may juſtly claim) and yet I hope I may, without being thought Arrogant, affirm, that I have given it ſo much the proper Idiom of the *Engliſh*, that you'll find it eaſie, ſmooth, and Natural, and as pleaſing as 'tis uſeful; for ſuch a Mixture being moſt grateful, ought to be aimed at by thoſe who write. The Follies, the Superſtition, the Idolatry, the Tyrannical Uſurpation of the Church of *Rome*, are here repreſented, in ſuch lively, and yet deform'd Colours, that no man who pretends to be reaſonable, but will endeavour to avoid 'em. Can any one imagine himſelf ſafe under that Religion, where the

Name of God is onely made use of as a Pretext, and instead of that *Interest* set up, and really *worshipped*. Religion is both reveal'd and Natural, to instruct us fully: In the former, God has been graciously pleas'd to give us his Word, but the *Romanists* have inhumanely forbid the reading it: To attain to a perfect knowledge of the latter, he has endu'd us with Reason, but that is enslav'd by their positive Determinations: nay, they rob us of our Senses too, by their establish'd Principle of *Transubstantiation*; so that indeed the Peoples Religion does wholly consist in a blind obedience to a *Pretended-Infallible-Priest*. How happy then are we! who are under a Government where the reading of the Scriptures, (the Rule of Faith) is not only allowed, but commanded by the Church: A Church free from the Extremities, on one hand, of Idolatry, and on the other, of Enthusiasm; so that here we have the Opportunities of improving both our Religion and our Reason, not being forbid the free Exercise of the one, or oblig'd to do violence to the other; of being both good Christians and Philosophers, for the one may be consistent with the other, which is clearly demonstrated by this short Treatise, which I hope will meet with a kind Entertainment in the World.

THE

THE PREFACE FROM THE *FRENCH.*

THOSE who are acquainted with *Monſieur de Gombaud*, know, that he ſet a greater value on his Diſcourſes concerning Religion, than on any of his other Works. He was invited to write of that Subject, upon a pure charitable deſign of making the Truth known to ſuch who were yet under the darkneſs of Error, and to confirm thoſe in the true Faith, who were either born in, or had embraced it. He frequently complain'd of two things, the one was, that thoſe who writ concerning Religion, were too Voluminous, urging Proof upon Proof, and Authority upon Authority, without being careful to obſerve a due Order, and clearneſs in their Diſcourſes: The other was, that many perſwaded themſelves, the *true Doctrine* was not conſiſtent with an *Elegant Style*. To ſhew how they were deceived in this particular, he compos'd his *Conſiderations on the Chriſtian Religion* when he was yet young, and in the Vigour of his Age; and in this has really demonſtrated, that an Author may be both ſtrong and perſpicuous, ſhort and full, ſolid and elegant. Having communicated this Piece to many of his Friends, and even to ſome of the *Roman Communion*; it was ſo well eſteem'd by all of 'em, that he was encouraged after that to make a *Treatiſe* on

the Euchariſt, and then another, which he preſented to one of his Friends, under the Name of *Ariſtander*. Moſt of his Letters were writ in a much fuller Age. Throughout his Works, the ſtrength and admirable ingenuity of his Mind, his extraordinary faculty of thinking of, and expreſſing things, will be diſcover'd. I will ſay nothing of the Reaſons that oblig'd him to keep theſe excellent Writings private; I am ſure he paſſionately deſir'd to have publiſh'd 'em, believing they would be of great uſe, and it may be there has not yet been any Secular Man known in the World, who was more zealous for the Glory of God, or had a greater, or a more ſincere Love for his Neighbour than he had. But when the heat and earneſtneſs with which he writes, ſhall be obſerv'd, and withal, it ſhall be conſider'd that all he had to ſubſiſt on, did abſolutely depend on Court, it will not be thought ſtrange that he did not make 'em Publick in his Life-time. That the World might not be depriv'd of 'em after his Death, which it might, if they had fallen into the hands of any who were not of his Religion, he put 'em in his latter days into thoſe of a good Friend, whoſe Fidelity and Kindneſs he had experienc'd, whom he oblig'd to promiſe him to keep 'em ſafe, till a convenient Opportunity offer'd it ſelf to publiſh 'em. This Friend always deſign'd to perform theſe Deſires, and his own Promiſe; but beſides the difficulty of Printing things of this Nature in the Kingdom, he met with many other Impediments. At length, after divers Attempts and Delays, he reſolved to make the dear Children of his Friend change their Climate, in hopes that when they return'd home, tho' in a ſtrange Garb, they would be own'd as truly *French*. I leave the Reader to judge of their Merits, and of thoſe of their Father. His Works have long ſince made him ſo well known in *France*, and in other Nations too, where they underſtood, and lov'd the Tongue, that 'twill be needleſs to ſay any thing of 'em to thoſe who have but ſeen his *Eudymion*, his *Letters in Proſe*, his *Paſtoral of Amarante*, his *Tragedy of the Danaides*, his *Collection of Miſcellaneous*

cellaneous Poems, in which are his incomparable *Sonnets*, especially those called the *Christian*, and his *Epigrams*, of which there are Three Books. And this is to give notice to such who may not possibly have met with 'em, that there are such Books, that they may have the opportunity of having the same knowledge and opinion of 'em that others had.

Besides he left a *Tragicomidy of Cydippe*, and loose Papers enough to have made a new *Collection of Poems*, especially *Sonnets and Epigrams*; but having fallen into the hands of such who did not well understand those things, have not yet seen the Light. I could very much enlarge my self upon what concerns the Person and Life of this famous Man, but by both the one and the other he had procur'd so large a Reputation in the World, that I should inform those who are living of little of him, but for the sake of Posterity I will add----That *John-Oger de Gombaud* was a Gentleman of *Xaintonge*, and younger Brother by a fourth Marriage; which he would frequently say in Raillery, as an excuse that he was not Rich. He was tall, well-made, of a good Meen, and look'd like a Man of Quality. His Piety was undissembled, his Honesty thoroughly experienc'd, his Manners grave, and well-regulated. He had a Heart as Noble as his Aspect promis'd it, a Mind upright, and naturally vertuous, of an exalted Spirit, less fertile than judicious, of a violent hot Humour, presently provok'd to Anger, and yet had a serious and compos'd Look. After having finish'd all his Studies under the most celebrated Masters of his time at *Bourdeaux*, he came to *Paris*, at the latter end of the Reign of *Henry* the Great, where he suddenly made himself known, and valued too.

This mighty Monarch being unhappily Assassinated, was bewailed by all the *French*, as the Father of his Country; and the Poets did adorn his Tomb with mournful Flowers they had gather'd from *Parnassus*. Monsieur *de Gombaud*, tho' young, was not the last, or least Considerable amongst 'em. In the Minority of *Louis* the

the Juſt, and in the Regency of the Queen, *Mary de Medias*, his Mother, he was one that was highly eſteem'd by this Great Princeſs, there being no one of his Quality who had ſo free an acceſs to her, or was received with greater kindneſs. She being of a generous and free temper, and which ſhe loved to ſhow to deſerving Men, allow'd conſiderable Penſions to ſeveral Perſons of Learning and Ingenuity: That of Monſieur *de Gombaud* was Twelve hundred Crowns; which made him always appear in very good Equipage at Court, whether at *Paris*, or in Progreſſes, which were in thoſe times frequent. And being one who hated all ſuperfluous Expences, tho' no one more gentile in making ſuch which were neceſſary, had rais'd a pretty good Stock from what he ſpar'd out of his large Allowance, which was very ſerviceable to him when that came to be leſſen'd; when both Civil and Forreign Wars had almoſt dryed up that Fountain from whence he had had ſuch Plenty.

He was at firſt reduc'd from Twelve hundred Crowns to Eight, and then from Eight hundred to Four, which were continued to him to his Death; yet without being paid, ſince the War of *Paris*, but from the friendſhip of ſome Great and Generous Perſons, by whom he had the honour to be known and favour'd, amongſt which the Duke and Dutcheſs of *Montauſier* were the principal. For ſome years alſo he had a Penſion under the Great Seal from Monſieur *de Seguier*, Chancellor of *France*. He was always very healthful, to which his Frugality and Regular manner of Life did much contribute. But walking one day in his Chamber, which was uſual with him, and his foot ſlipping, he fell down and hurt ſo very much one of his Hips, that he was after this unhappy Accident, to the end of his Life, almoſt always confin'd to his Bed. He liv'd even an whole Age, if the time of his Birth, writ with his own Hand in one of his Books, were true, as he had aſſur'd a Friend of his it was, who never ſpake of it 'till after Monſieur *de Gombaud*'s Death. He had been honour'd with the Friendſhip of the moſt conſiderable Perſons of both Sexes of three Courts,

Courts, which he had ſeen; *viz.* That of *Henry* the Fourth, of *Louis* the Thirteenth, and *Louis* the Fourteenth. And in the Regency of two great Queens, *Mary de Medicis*, and *Anne of Auſtria*, no One was more conſtantly at Court, but eſpecially in the time of the former. But he did yet with greater diligence and pleaſure frequent that infinitely agreeable Company of Quality and Worth, who met at the Houſe of *Rambouillet*, which was a leſſer Court made up of choice Perſons, fewer in number, but, if I durſt ſay it, more refin'd than that of the *Louvre*, becauſe not One was admitted to approach this Temple of Honour, where Vertue was rever'd under the Name of the Incomparable *Artenice*, who was not worthy of her Approbation and Eſteem.

To conclude, Monſieur *de Gombaud* was both loved and admir'd by all thoſe, who, as he, had offer'd Sacrifices to the Muſes, and the Graces; and I doubt not but ſucceeding Ages will be juſter to him than that in which he lived; and that his Excellent Works will procure him an Immortal Name, which is the Reward of all Learned Men, when they can reach that height to which this Gentleman had arrived.

The

The Principal Matters contain'd in this Treatiſe.

1. *Conſiderations upon the Chriſtian Religion.*

2. *A Treatiſe concerning the Euchariſt.*

3. *A Diſcourſe, in which the Author gives his Reaſons why he prefers the Reformed Religion before the* Roman Catholick.

4. *A Letter to a Lord at Court, who endeavour'd to perſwade him to turn* Catholick.

5. *A Letter to an Officer of the Crown, who often diſcours'd to him of Religion.*

6. *A Letter to Monſieur de la* Militiere, *who deſir'd his Opinion in writing, on the Books if Controverſie he had made.*

7 *A Letter to a Lady, who preſs'd him to go hear the Sermons of ſome of the Famous Preachers of the* Roman *Church.*

CON-

CONSIDERATIONS UPON THE *CHRISTIAN RELIGION.*

CHAP. I.

WHEN I first began to have the Use of my Senses and my Reason, I could not but frequently meditate on the Beauty of this *Great World*, the admirable Disposition of it's parts, those mutual Offices they each render to other, as well as those just Laws by which they are eternally conserv'd. On these extraordinary Effects, I often employ'd my Consideration; and yet the constant Custom of doing so, did not at all lessen my Wonder of 'em: I could not then but acknowledge, that the *Universe* was as a visible Word, that bespake, and manifestly prov'd a *God*; and in comparison of which, our Eloquence was silent, at least, so imperfect and contradictory to it self, that what it endeavour'd to bring to Light, it made more obscure. I observ'd

that every thing tended to it's natural End, punctually did it's Duty, unleſs *Man*; for he, from the very beginning, took part with the *Devils* themſelves, the Enemies of God Almighty, and thus ingratefully ſinn'd againſt him from whom he had received ſuch infinite Favours, who had made him in as great Perfection as could be, though not a God, yet after his own Image. But, as the firſt Product of his Mind was Vanity and Pride, ſo that of his Body was *Cain*, the Murderer of his Brother: and as all his Children inherit his Rebellion and Raſhneſs, ſo conſequently, his Puniſhment and Condemnation. In the general Obſervation I have made of 'em, I have found ſome of the Nature of Devils, others of Beaſts, many of both together, being guilty of Rapine and Extortion, their Hands ſtain'd with Blood; and in a Word, the whole Courſe of their Lives paſs'd either in private Conſpiracies, or open Rebellion and Thefts.

'Twas then a ſecret Horror ſeiz'd me, and a Sadneſs, even as the Shadow of Death, diſturb'd the ſereneſt days of my Life. 'Twas little Satisfaction to me, that God had made me *Man*, or that I was of the number of thoſe who bore the Name of *Chriſtians*, ſince I ſaw what Diſorders happen'd amongſt 'em, and that Malice and Ignorance were as predominant here, as with *Barbarians* and *Infidels*. Nothing was ſo averſe to me, as thoſe whom

I look'd on as my Fellow-members; and yet I found 'twas neceſſary, either to comply with 'em, and ſo make my ſelf an accomplice with 'em in their Exorbitances, or elſe, to render my ſelf perpetually deteſtable to 'em: yet, I conſider'd, that like Accidents did equally ſurprize both Old and Young, and I could not perſwade my ſelf, that any reaſonable Souls could find any real Satisfaction or Contentment under ſuch great Uncertainties that muſt needs follow.

My Reaſon it ſelf, and all its thoughtful Reſults, did but yet ſerve to torment me more, till I had carefully conſulted the Divine Oracles, the beſt of Books, and was aſſured by them, that God in his Providence did reſerve and mark out to himſelf ſome, for whom, even the Angels have reſpect; and who ſhall not be deſtroyed in the day of Vengeance. That this World is but a place of tryal to diſtinguiſh the Good from the Bad, a way that leads from Darkneſs to Light, from Miſery to eternal Happineſs. Theſe words I had heard with more Fear and Wavering than Aſſurance, (perceiving how very few either could or would underſtand 'em) had I not from themſelves learn't, that even Shepherds and Fiſhermen have more Knowledge in 'em than the greateſt Caſuits, or learned'ſt Philoſophers; and, that juſtly to comprehend their Meaning, we ſtand not in ſo much need of Logick or Rhetorick, as true Faith and Pie-

ty. That they teach a Knowledge, which puffeth not up, but does humble and abaſe men; and yet not ſo far, but (though mean and low in the World) have Courage enough to declare the Truth before the proudeſt Tyrant, and daily to run the hazard of their Lives, that by their Endeavours they may ſave others from Death.

Theſe divine Revelations, attended with a Spirit of Comfort, calmed my diſturbed mind: I found my ſelf ſo ſuddenly transformed from what I was, that that Sadneſs which had poſſeſſed me, though not quite gone, yet had changed its Nature; for, now 'twas occaſioned only by my Sins and Infirmities. If I have any remaining Fears, they do but ſtrengthen me, and provoke me to ſtrive with more Violence and Ardency to attain that end which Hope and Faith propoſe.

I was fill'd with a juſt ſenſe of Joy, ariſing, not from a tranſitory unſatisfying Pleaſure, but from a permanent ſatisfying Good; which, though communicative, encreaſes; and of which, though one may liberally diſpoſe, will not at all be diminiſh'd. 'Tis this which invites me to freely offer what I have received; to joyn my Voice with thoſe of the faithful, (whom God in his Providence has mixed with others) that the Truth may be loudly declared, ſo that thoſe will be inexcuſable who have heard it, and would not believe, or thoſe who betraying themſelves

to their private worldly Interest, feared to listen to it, lest they should be obliged to follow it's Dictates.

The Time may come, when they will, perhaps, accuse us of having been too remiss of not having sufficiently informed 'em, and then will they be ready to impute their voluntary Ignorance and Obstinacy to our Neglect or Weakness. And yet, when we endeavour to instruct 'em, some pity us, others laugh at, or despise us; and indeed, the most favourable Opinion they can have of us, is, that we are poor, simple, extravagant Creatures: Others are in Passion, and angry with us, ready to tear us in pieces, affront and injure us, look on us as Hereticks and Criminals, though our Crime is of that Nature, that we desire nothing more than to expose it even to the Censure of our very Judges.

But, to whom shall we discourse, we cannot be understood by Idolaters? The Prophets have pronounc'd such a Curse against 'em, that makes 'em void of Knowledge; makes 'em like even what they worship and adore. We cannot be understood by men of weak, or no Judgments; they comprehend nothing, and do but rather raise Doubts in themselves, than find Satisfaction. If they are of wicked debauch'd Lives, they are disturb'd to hear the Voice that condemns 'em. But, they are the most dangerous who have the most Learning; these use Tricks and Evasi-

ons, and wreſt the cleareſt Senſe and Words to their own meaning; the eaſieſt, and moſt natural Propoſitions, when they pleaſe, become difficult and ambiguous; they equally prove, and deny every thing; and at length, as a juſt Puniſhment upon 'em, they ſo far neglect the Knowledge of the Truth, as to be unhappy enough not to know themſelves; they have employ'd their Time and Studies ſo much in ſuperfluous things, that they have utterly loſt all manner of Care of ſuch that are neceſſary; they have made their humane Learning ſo much a Judge of the Divine, that it has render'd 'em infinitely worſe than if they had been altogether ignorant. Moreover, ſince 'tis hard to perſwade any one to what is diſagreeable to him, I cannot but fancy I hear the Wiſe men of the Age and our Courtiers, ſaying, *Prethee talk to us of what is pleaſing and grateful to us, and don't you pretend to be wiſer than the Church.* They ought not, they believe, be better than their Fathers were, or follow other Cuſtoms than thoſe of their own Country or Towns: The Eſtates they have will not allow 'em to make any Profeſſion which may be in the leaſt injurious to 'em, and at whatever Rate it is, God and Religion muſt ſuit with their Intereſt and Convenience. How! to live contrary to the Opinion of the World, to have different Sentiments from the great Doctors of the Chair, to go againſt the belief of the People, the

the Magiſtrate and Prince; Is not this to expoſe one's ſelf to be thwarted by every one? To talk thus of Reformation, is to be look'd on as a Diſturber of the Peace, or a Madman; and Liberty is grown to that paſs, that 'tis incurable. Religion is almoſt turn'd into Superſtition; and on all ſides, the Corruption of the Age is ſo great, that there is not only need of a Deluge to cleanſe the Earth, but a Univerſal Fire to conſume it.

To what end then is all this Diſcourſe? What Light or new Invention ſhall we add to thoſe ſo many excellent ancient Leſſons we have already receiv'd, which, becauſe always neceſſary, are always new? If we have not ſuch Articles of Faith, ſuch Catechiſms as are ſufficient for our Inſtructions, to make us the beſt Chriſtians, yet there is nothing wanting in the Old and New Teſtament, to inform us of our Duties. Nevertheleſs, ſince he who ſupplies us with Underſtanding, and has planted his Word in our Hearts, would have us publiſh it with our Mouths, that being converted, we may labour to convert our Brethren; We ought not to be ſilent where there is ſo great a Neceſſity of ſpeaking, of writing at leaſt, what the World may not be diſpleaſed to read.

But, let us take Care, that we do not imitate thoſe ambitious Writers, who only aim at procuring Glory, and Reputation

by their voluminous Works, with which they burthen the Minds of men, not conſidering, that a Multitude of Words does argue nothing more than their difficulty of Conception, or expreſſing themſelves.

Let us therefore by ſpeaking, endeavour (notwithſtanding all manner of Oppoſition) to ſave ſome by Fear, pulling them out of the Fire, and try if it will not pleaſe God to open the Heart, amongſt Men, of a *Naaman*, and amongſt Women, of a *Lydie*.

CHAP. II.

'TIS obſervable, that the moſt celebrated Holy men, the firſt Writers of Sacred Hiſtory, who have inſtructed us in the Laws of living well, and taught us the Methods of Salvation, have not given themſelves the trouble to find out Arguments to prove, or expreſly to demonſtrate the Being of a Deity, believing that 'twas impoſſible for men to be reaſonable, and doubt of ſo manifeſt a Truth. We cannot but confeſs indeed, that every thing, in its proper Language, does aſſert this ſo clearly, that the whole World ſeems to be but one large Object, by which God is pleas'd to make himſelf ſeen, being in his Nature *Inviſible*. Beſides thoſe Principles

ciples which are naturally implanted in us, whereby we diſcern betwixt Good and Evil; thoſe Terrours of Conſcience, thoſe Rational Diſcourſes which exalt us even above our ſelves, that tendency to a ſovereign Good, the deſire of Perfection and Immortality, do yet imprint a fuller ſence of him in our Minds, than we can have of him by our Eyes. If therefore we argue from within our ſelves, or from without, we find him every where, and this Notion is ſo univerſally receiv'd, that it can proceed from nothing but Nature it ſelf, ſo that thoſe who disbelieve this, ſeem to have deveſted themſelves of it. To deny a *God* and his *Providence*, the Wiſe and Judicious ſay, *is to be deaf to ones own Voice, and a Stranger to ones ſelf.*

Yet there are thoſe who enjoy the ſoft and pleaſurable Benefits of Life, and good Senſe, and yet acknowledge not its Author, or at leaſt, do but ſpeciouſly pretend it, that they may avoid the being thought Atheiſts: Theſe men accommodate themſelves to all ſorts of Religions, having none at all, or do embrace or quit 'em, as they may be uſeful or diſadvantageous to their Pleaſures and Intereſt. They will oblige themſelves to no Laws, but ſuch which gratifie 'em; the juſteſt to them are the cruelleſt; and the very name of Divinity does either offend 'em, or makes no impreſſion at all on 'em. They deſtroy, as much as 'tis poſſi-

ble, the Author of their Being, and pleaſe themſelves in disbelieving, what if they believed, they would be bound to reverence and fear. Their licentious Humours give 'em not leave to inform themſelves of what they ought; and doubtleſs they either read not at all, or if they do, don't meditate on it; but if they do, they are ſo naturally inclin'd to Evil, that they turn all to an ill ſence. However, theſe would be thought the ſubtle, ingenious men of the Age, imagining they know much more than others, having learn'd from ſome lewd cunning Fellow two or three falſe Arguments to prove their horrid Opinions, which paſs with ſuch as themſelves, the Profane, or with the Ignorant; beyond theſe they proceed not, or if they do, 'tis like unlearn'd men, ſtill putting Queſtions, and never making Anſwer to any. 'Tis with ſorrow I ſpeak it, that moſt Princes and Noble men are ſo far from ridding their Courts of theſe Monſters, that they are entertain'd as better Company than others; receiv'd as particular Friends and Confidents; ſo that thus inſenſibly they themſelves become guilty with them of offending the Divine Majeſty. Without theſe, their Converſation at Table, and in Company, will be thought dull and inſipid. Here are they loaded with Honour, and filled with the choiceſt Delicacies, and then, when they ought to make the higheſt acknowledgments,

they

they pronounce the greateſt Blaſphemies. What they ſay is receiv'd with Applauſe, and the more are they valued, the more impudently they attack God Almighty. Men, the moſt ingrateful, and leaſt reaſonable of all ſorts, making acknowledgments only to themſelves, believing all they have to proceed from their own Induſtry or good Fortune. True Children of the Devil, who is the falſe Accuſer, ſtriving to ſignalize themſelves by the ſame Methods their Father do's, by oppoſing, or openly fighting againſt the Truth.

Since theſe acknowledge no greater Wiſdom than their own, they may believe perhaps, 'tis by their Virtue, by their Care, the Earth is ſupported by its own weight, that it is incompaſſed by the vaſt Waters of the Sea, without being overflown; That by their Providence and Induſtry ſo many different Streams paſs through its Veins, ſome riſing into Fountains, refreſhing all ſorts of Creatures, and then making uſeful Rivers, fill'd with Fiſh, and ſerviceable to entertain a Commerce between men; And doubtleſs, by their Order, the Sun riſes at an appointed time, to light them, when ſatisfy'd with ſleep, and each Seaſon returns to gratifie them with all manner of Delight. If they can't in all theſe but confeſs their inſufficicy, why will they not alſo own that there are Powers greater than theirs employ'd in

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these wonderful Services, and by degrees they'l find one Superiour to others, which are finite, and to have a beginning, and therefore necessarily depend on one that has none, which is infinite? Otherwise we should pass from the less to the greater without end, from cause to cause, without finding the first or last, which alone merits the name of Divinity. To what are we come, that we must even now with Industry endeavour to prove the Truth of the being of a God! Is not this indeed to affront men as reasonable as our selves, to shew 'em what each particular Sence does constantly prove to 'em? Is not this to teach those to see who have their Eyes open, and tell others they have the use of Reason, who profess themselves men? Shall we add to these Considerations, the frequently repealed Arguments of those who have undertaken so high, but just and reasonable a Defence? In effect, if there was no God, How could the World be? Could it be the Workmanship and the Workman of it self? Could it be before it was? How can these agree, and yet but the same World? If it be eternal, and is independent on any first Cause, that Order which we observe, and must be an effect of admirable Wisdom, with all those Powers which are differently communicated to each part, would, in a manner, prove what some have fancied, That it is *God himself*.

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For, it is not in the leaſt probable, that it's Beauty, it's Order, and Duration, can be the effects of blind and confus'd Chance; Can we imagine, that from thence could proceed ſuch long and regular Succeſſions of Time and Motion? Can we attribute to that, ſo much Care, and Wiſdom, as to be able to make ſo different Cauſes tend to the ſame Effect? This certainly, under another Name would be God himſelf, and his Blaſphemers would meet in every place, what their guilty Souls are afraid of finding any where: otherwiſe, What is this Fortune, but a vain and inſignificant Title, an imaginary Idol, that exiſts but in our Fancies, to which we erroniouſly attribute ſuch Effects, of whoſe Cauſes we are ignorant.

She appears to us leſs or greater, according to our Proportion of Knowledge; and, if we could but free the World from Ignorance, the Notion of Fortune would be laid aſide. 'Tis then the Deity of the ignorant, which no wiſe man adores; and I cannot but wonder, how thoſe who plead for her can believe, themſelves reaſonable, ſince, according to the Opinion they have of all things, they muſt confeſs they were made by Chance, and conſequently, that they move, act, and ſpeak ſo. There are amongſt theſe, ſome who pretend to believe a God, but, at the ſame time, make him careleſs and idle, ſlothful, and wholly unconcern'd in the Affairs of

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the Univerſe, at leaſt, in all ſublunary things, imagining perhaps, ſays one, that this would be too great Trouble to him; *As if their Impieties could give him any Comfort or Satisfaction.* Is not this to deny, whilſt they own him, and boldly to confine the Actions of an infinite Power? Is not this to make to themſelves a God, who cannot barely act as a Man, to allow him Underſtanding without Counſel, a Will without Freedom, Goodneſs without Communication; in a Word, a Being without a Being, and leſs than that of the *Elements*, which comes neareſt to no Being at all.

But, not to inſiſt farther on the univerſal chain of Cauſes with their Effects, which plainly demonſtrate, that things of the ſublimeſt nature, are aſſiſted by thoſe of the loweſt, and that theſe neceſſarily depend on the ſame Wiſdom and Power by which they are made and conſerv'd. Who is he that in his Anger chaſtiſes both Kings and People; that removes the Scepter from one, and gives it to another; that overturns Empires, and in an inſtant, changes the Face of Eſtates; and to ſhew that this is done by his Power, has long ſince foretold it by the Mouth of his Meſſengers and Prophets? Who was it that puniſh'd the Sins of men by a miraculous Flood, acknowledged by all the World; and by whoſe Advice was one only Family ſaved from it? Who was it that promis'd ſuch a Deluge

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ſhould never return, and who has ſo faithfully kept his Promiſe? What Spirit foreſaw the coming of the *Meſſias* three or four thouſand years, of whom the Prophets have ſo particularly ſpoke, as if they, as well as the Apoſtles, had ſeen him: From whom, but God himſelf, or ſome Angel ſent from him, were thoſe Predictions of the Poſterity of *Abraham*, of the Throne of *David*, and of that Lamp which ſhould be kept in his Family, of the diſperſing and rejecting of the *Jews*, and the Converſion of the *Gentiles*? If it be told me that there are Mathematicians, Aſtrologers, and Wiſe men, who foretell things to come, I muſt ask by what hand they are writ in the Heavens, in ſuch Characters that men can read 'em, and who has plac'd the Signs in the Stars, or rather, their Vertues and Cauſes, which the ſame men cannot comprehend? It muſt needs be, that thoſe who are not touch'd with theſe Conſiderations, are blinded with Paſſion that prevents their Reaſon, who, from Cuſtom become obſtinate, and from Ignorance, ſtupid. We find that there are many very wiſe, and knowing in all worldly things; nay, are ignorant and inſenſible of nothing but Divine ones: But, if I am not deceived, moſt bear in their Breaſt both their Accuſer and Judge, and will, earlier or later, be forc'd to ſay as others have done, *We are ſo weary of the ways of Iniquity, that we can endure 'em no longer.*

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

THUS whatever presents it self to our sight do's speak of a God, and prove that he is; but what he is, neither all those Objects, nor all our Reason can discover to us. Yet so much as we know of him, is sufficient to make us believe, and worship what we don't perfectly know. Let it be then that the continu'd course of Causes and Effects is not infinite, that all things either reach or tend visibly to their End; that from the Ancientest of Books, in respect of which all others are but new, and imperfect, we know the Origine and Rise of all Nations; That the Powers of the Heavens are become weak, that the Age and Strength of Men are impaired, in comparison of that account we receive of 'em in Sacred and Profane History, it does evidently appear that God created the World; and for an additional Perfection to his greatest Work, made Man after his own Image, that is, wholly conformable to his Will, not in Essence but Imitation, and as Perfect and as Happy as the Noblest Creature could be. He was plac'd in an honourable Station, between Beasts and Angels, was the Bond of the Universe, the End of all created things, over which he had eternally commanded, had he been only but obedient to his Creator. But not content

tent with those abundant Favours he had received, rashly aspires to a degree above his Sovereign, endeavours to rise higher than the Top it self, and aiming at something in nothing, was near returning to that first Nothing from whence he came. How strangely bold! What high Presumption is it to covet being equal with God! What base Incredulity to accuse him of falshood or Envy! What horrid Ingratitude and Rebellion, to set the Devil in Gods place! How extremely spiteful and uncharitable was he to his Children, to sell 'em before they were born, and enslave 'em before they knew what Liberty was! He scarce imagin'd that he should be believ'd the worst Father of the World, that the Curse he had drawn on himself would extend it self from one end of the Earth to the other, from the beginning to the end of all Ages, and would be the most certain Inheritance he could leave to his Posterity. He foresaw not, that instead of that commerce and fellowship he held with Angels, instead of that Access he had to, and Communication with God himself, his unhappy Successors would converse only with Devils, and must eternally submit to their Power and Tyranny; and that to live amongst men, would be to herd with Lyons, Tygers, Vipers, and Dragons. He foresaw not, that instead of an Eternal Spring which he began to enjoy, and might have preserv'd

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for 'em, they would ſuffer the Extremities of cold Winter, or be ſtifled by the exceſſive Heats of Summer, that inſtead of thoſe fair delightful Trees he ſaw in the Terreſtrial Paradice, and of that delicious Fruit, and thoſe curious Flowers he had the liberty to gather there, they would ſeldom ſee but Racks and Gibbets, the devouring Grave, and dead mens Bones. He foreſaw not, that beſides the Hardſhips and Swet of Labour, the Terrors of fatal Neceſſity, ſharp Pains, or languiſhing Diſeaſes, and the continual Horrors of approaching Death; there would be Judgments and Plagues that would ruine whole Towns, and deſtroy Provinces, that there would be ſometimes ſo great a Mortality, and the dead ſo frightful, that there would be ſcarce any left, either to lament or bury 'em; that Nature would become ſo diveſted of her ſelf, that Men would devour Men, and Children tore in Bits would again return to their Mothers Bellies. He foreſaw not that the greateſt part of his Poſterity would become ſo odious to each other, that they would pleaſe themſelves with perſecuting the juſteſt and moſt innocent of their Brethren, rather than imitate them; that they would not content themſelves to ſtone ſome, and maſſacre others, but would wittily invent ſome new Puniſhment, by which they might force them to deny the Truth, to worſhip Wood or Stone, or elſe to under-

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go the cruelleſt Torments the Furies of Hell it ſelf could inſpire 'em with. No, he foreſaw not all theſe things; and the Devil, who flatter'd him with Hopes that his Eyes ſhould be more open'd, endeavour'd to blind him more, that he might throw him into a bottomleſs Abyſſe, from whence, 'twas not to be imagined, that ever either any Humane, Angelick, or Divine Power, could juſtly retrieve him.

How is he diſguiſed by this Fall! what Proportion is there between what he is and what he was! He is aſham'd of himſelf, having only ſo much Sight left him as to diſcover his Nakedneſs, and ſo much Knowledge as to perceive his Error. From the Image of God, after which he was made, he is transform'd in an Inſtant into that of a Devil, and he has no more of the firſt Innocence remaining, than the Trouble of having loſt it. What comfort can he find after this Loſs? He cannot hope for any from his Reaſon, that having help'd to deſtroy him. He who could not preſerve himſelf upright when ſtanding, how, when fallen, ſhall he recover himſelf? What can he promiſe himſelf, either from Angels or God himſelf, ſince he has broken that Law by which he was obliged to Obedience or Puniſhment? The Puniſhment which bears the ſame Date with Guilt, does, without Intermiſſion torment him, and has left him only ſo much

Life

Life as to make him ſenſible of the Terrors of Death. But, what is yet worſe, the Offence is aggravated according to the Greatneſs of the offended Perſon; and as he has ſinn'd againſt an infinite Being, ſo he muſt dye, or ſuffer infinitely! What Confuſion of Thoughts, What Remorſe, What Terrors torment his Mind! Since he was not only told his Duty, but threatned with Diſgrace if he did it not, and to invite him to be the more careful, one would have believed the Decree of his Death ſhould have kept him from ſinning. To what deſpair does he find himſelf reduc'd, and what can he do or imagine in this ſad miſerable Condition! Unleſs God has made what he cannot repent him of having made; and that he builds not to pull down, and his Glory will not ſuffer his Workmanſhip to periſh. That 'tis not probable the moſt excellent of Creatures was deſtin'd to everlaſting Miſery, that being ſeduc'd, and the Fault not altogether his own, he ſhould be obliged to make Satisfaction, as the Devils themſelves, who are always doing it, but never accompliſh it.

Howſoever it is, he ſaw no Expedient for his Deliverance, and could not imagine how he might find Mercy from God, without violating his Juſtice. 'Twas this that neither he nor all his Poſterity could conceive.

Some have been ſo amaz'd at it, that they have turn'd Atheiſts, others made to themſelves

ſelves Gods after their own faſhion, and became Idolaters. This unhappy temper, but ſo natural and ſo ſtrong, has even univerſally prevail'd, and ſo corrupted the very Senſe and Underſtanding of Men, that they would have the Objects of Adoration Corporal and viſible, as themſelves, not being able to frame to themſelves any thing higher, attributing to them humane Paſſions, and appointed 'em Services according to their own vain Imaginations. They have not only been leſs than men by worſhipping them, but than Beaſts themſelves, having worſhipped thoſe too. They adored the moſt abject and vileſt Creatures, who were ſo far from bearing any marks of Divinity, that they had not common ſignes of Life; and, leſt their Idolatry ſhould not be ſufficiently execrable, they worſhipped even the Infernal Powers, the greateſt Enemies of the Creator. Many, believing that there was a future, and better ſtate of Life for Man than that of this World, inſtead of ſearching the Divine Oracles, to inſtruct 'em in the Attainment of their great End, have apply'd themſelves to doubtful and Diabolical ones. Inſtead of the only and true Remedy by which they might be cleanſed from all Sin and Corruption, they have taken indirect Meaſures, and from hence wearied themſelves with Ceremonies, Abſtinencies, Purifications, Faſtings, Offerings, which have been

only

only effectual to add freſh Troubles to their Life. For what Sacrifices, what Beaſts, what Hecatombs can expiate the Crime only of one Man? Or rather, what Man is able, being conceiv'd in Sin, to make ſatisfaction, not for others; but for himſelf? And what Sacrifices can he offer but Ingratitude, Envy, Hatred, Malice, Vain thoughts, and lying Words? What is his Virtue but Vice palliated, his Prudence but Subtilty and Fraud, his Valour but raſhneſs, and his Wiſdom but Hypocriſie? If he does pray, 'tis only from Cuſtom or for Faſhion-ſake, and if at ſometimes he is more than ordinary Zealous, 'tis not ſo much the love of God that excites him to it, as the fear of Evil threatning him, or the ſence of it, which is burthenſome to him. What therefore can he do better than daily to make Confeſſion of his Sins? but from thence he is to expect, if to be judged according to his Merits, only Death and Damnation.

If then Man by all his Reaſon could never ſanctifie one Man only, if all the Philoſophy in the World could never make one Believer, or diſcover a Good which Death cannot rob us of; what remains then but that we believe that, thoſe who have been inſpired by God, have taught, is beſt; that we rely on the firſt and ſureſt Principles, that the Means are univerſal, which God only can reveal.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

AS 'tis an undoubted Truth, that Man was not made by Chance, ſo 'tis as certain that he was not made in Vain; that he was not deſtin'd to everlaſting Torments, or to return to that Nothing from whence he came; and the ſame Power that gave him his firſt Being, will give him a future Well-Being. Shall not He, who by thoſe Sparks of the Divine Image remaining in him, can meaſure the Heavens ſtanding upon the Earth, be immortal? What would ſignifie elſe thoſe many Promiſes and Revelations? Who would have taken ſo much trouble to have deceived us? What would Juſtice and Piety be accounted, but vain empty Names with which the World is abuſed? and to what purpoſe all our Religion, if after this Life there was nothing to be hoped for? 'Tis true that our degenerate and ſenſual Inclinations perſwade us to follow the common way; to enjoy the Pleaſures of the preſent time, without any concern for thoſe of hereafter, to live as Beaſts, as if to dye as thoſe: But let us lay aſide all thoſe profane and inconſiderate Thoughts. The firſt Act of the Creator is a Proof of all the reſt; for He who made us out of nothing, can as well raiſe us from the dead. Will he ſuffer ſuch to eſcape unpuniſh'd who fully and de-

face his Holy Image? Shall the Devil conquer in this Combat, or triumph over the Works of the Almighty? No, the Happineſs of man in his firſt State of Innocence, how great ſoever, was not his ultimate End; nor was it ſo compleat, but that he will be yet infinitely more happy: but 'twas neceſſary to leave him to his own Will and Counſels, as well to try him, as to oblige him to a Knowledge of himſelf, which might ſerve as a ſtep to raiſe him to that of his Creator: He would elſe, perhaps, have believed he could have ſubſiſted without the aid of any other Power, and would not have duely conſider'd, that there is but one only Being, pure, holy, and true, on whom all others depend, and without whom, we muſt either be not at all, or eternally miſerable.

That men therefore may not too ſecurely reſt on the Remains of their own Strength and Vertue, God has given 'em means to try themſelves, and let 'em know, that they all equally fell with the firſt man, are naturally Slaves to Sin, and conſequently, Tributaries to *Hell* and *Death*.

He has given 'em his Law, which, as perfect as it is, ſhews 'em but their Imperfection. It's being juſt, makes 'em the more criminal, it inſtructs but to confound 'em; and ſeems ſo far from promiſing any good to 'em, that it takes away all manner of Hopes: 'tis a killing Letter, an intolerable Yoke, an Inſtru-

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ment of Death, ſo far from juſtifying, that it brings all under the ſame Condemnation: Yet, to ſpeak more favourably of it, 'tis a Looking-glaſs that repreſents to 'em what they were, what they are, and what they muſt be; 'tis a Flower, whoſe Fruit is the greateſt Grace can happen to 'em; 'tis a Flambeau that Lights 'em in the Night, till the riſing of the Sun.

As the incomprehenſible Unity which comprehends all things, is the ſovereign Perfection of God, ſo Union with God is the chief Perfection of Man; but we cannot come to him, unleſs firſt he draws us, or rather, unleſs he is pleas'd to come down to us. This is the great Myſtery of our Redemption, which even thoſe who receiv'd the Promiſes of it confirmed by Numbers of Signs and Miracles, ſaw at ſo great a diſtance, and through ſuch ſhadows of Darkneſs, that they could much better believe and hope for than comprehend it. Obſerving the great diſtance between Heaven and Earth, they foreſaw no way to fill up this Abyſſe, nor could they imagine how they ſhould aſcend thus high, but by *Jacob*'s Ladder.

Yet Reaſon does often aſſent to things even beyond it ſelf; and by this at length we underſtand, what at firſt we could not poſſibly imagine. If then Reaſon tells us, that a Medium is kept between two Extreams, and yet with this Medium theſe Extreams equally

agree, though never so distant; that 'tis necessary that a Mediator be capable of the Sentiments and Affections of each Party whom he reconciles; that he makes a just Estimate of Right and Wrong between the one and the other; who can doubt but that he who is sent us from Heaven, is endu'd with all Qualities necessary for him? that he partakes both of the divine and humane Nature; in a word, that he is both God and Man; and yet Man, conceiv'd after another manner than others, lest his natural Corruption and Sins make him incompatible with the Justice and Purity of God. If he was not Man, we should have no part in him, nor could his Satisfaction be imputed to us. If he was not God, he could not communicate to us his immortal Vertues, his Glory and Happiness. If he was only Man, he could not conquer Death, or have risen from the Grave, he would have sunk under the Pain, and have been reduc'd to nothing. And if he was only God, he could not have dyed, or receiv'd from himself the Satisfaction which the Law he made obliges us to.

He must then suffer, and yet be impassible; dye, and yet immortal; descend into Hell and rise again: He must conquer the Infernal Powers, and let us see, that in him truly are the Entries and Issues of Death. It is necessary, that he who will deliver others from the Curse, does both suffer and over-

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come it; and that there may be some Proportion between the Fault and the Punishment, it is necessary that a Person of infinite Worth does render a temporal and finite Suffering of infinite Value; for, doubtless, God rather chose that his Son should dye for the Sins of the World, than the whole World should perish. Though there be no Justice that allows, that one who is innocent suffer for the guilty, yet none forbids it, on Condition, that he voluntarily offers himself, and that he is not absolutely destroy'd by the Punishment, but that it remains in his Power to lay down and take up his Life again.

O wonderful Effects of Eternal Power and Wisdom, who from one Man, in the beginning, made a Woman that caus'd us all to dye; and since has pleas'd, in the Fulness of Time, of a Woman to make a Man that will us restore to Life again! Thus is the Divine and Humane Nature mysteriously united, and without the Properties either of the one or the other, being changed.

The Son of God is joyn'd in Unity of Person with the Son of Man; I say, the Son, and not the Father, because we cannot have for Intercessor that Person to whom he must intercede. He who sends, cannot be sent; and then as the Father does nothing of himself, but all things by the Son, 'tis reasonable, that the second Creation should be made by

the ſame as the firſt was. Who can more effectually ſpeak than He who is the Word it ſelf? Who can better renew in us the Divine Image, than He who firſt form'd it? and who can better beſtow on us the right of Children, than the Poſſeſſour of it? But it is not enough that He makes Satisfaction, or that that be imputed to us; but 'tis neceſſary that this Grace be conferr'd upon us; that it be apply'd to us, which is the Office of the Spirit that equally proceeds both from the Father and the Son: 'Tis He that does both enlighten, and purifie us, that makes us underſtand, love, and believe theſe Myſteries; that makes us, as he did the Bleſſed Virgin, conceive our Saviour. He is the Bond of Love that unites us to Divinity; 'tis the true anointing by which we are made Kings, Prieſts, and Prophets: To conclude, This is He who gives himſelf as a Pledge, and aſſurance of the Promiſes of a future Life, of the Reſurrection, and of Glory.

This great Mediator is then come, and as he was foretold, not as a Conquerour, as a *Cyrus* or *Alexander*, but a man of ſorrows, conſecrated, by his Afflictions, the publick Victim of Mankind, whoſe Merit is ſufficient for all, but only applicable to thoſe who believe in him. He is come, not to ſhed the Blood of others, but his own; to overcome Rebellion by Obedience, Force and Power by

by Weakneſs, and Pride by Humility: and this makes him appear greater, and more Divine, as well as us to admire and adore him. Behold the ſole Object of Religion, which is not onely to ſave Man, but of him to make a God, without prejudice to the Divine Unity, or Holy Trinity. For what name can we give the Son of man, who makes one and the ſame Perſon with the Son of God? And of what Race ought we to eſteem thoſe, whom he has vouchſafed to honour with the name of Brethren? Now this Religion is eſtabliſh'd; not by Contention, or private Conſpiracy; not by the favour of Kings, or the ſuffrage of the People, not by the cunning of Philoſophers, or the Eloquence of Orators; not by a multitude of men, as the *Mahometan*, or by numbers of Gods, as the Pagan; but by the alone publiſhing of the ſimple and naked Truth. Yet this Truth, notwithſtanding all manner of oppoſition, has flouriſh'd, and made it ſelf known throughout the World. It has ſo prevailed, that Errours of all ſorts have been confounded, all Sects diſpers'd and waſted, falſe Oracles, with Idols and their worſhippers, have fall'n before it.

CHAP. V.

AFter that which we are taught concerning the only way of Man's Salvation, What can we learn from all the Religions in the World? To what would *Mahomet* perſwade us, if the Name of Chriſtian be ſo hateful to him, if he differs from the Religion of Jeſus Chriſt, to which, all the Prophets do ſo ſtrongly adhere? Is it not ſtrange, that ſo many inſpired men ſhould be rais'd at different Times, and at diſtant Places, to foretell the coming of one Man alone, who was to be rejected by his own, and receiv'd by all the other Nations of the Earth? Undoubtedly, after what we learn of him from the Scriptures, and thoſe Commands it lays upon us, as well as thoſe Inſtructions we receive from 'em, we have no need of being longer curious, but to ſubmit and obey. Let thoſe who make to themſelves Gods, appoint Services for 'em, 'tis otherwiſe with him, who is not made by our Opinion, but is the Maker of us all. His Will cannot be diſcover'd by our Conceit or vain Imaginations, but by his Word alone; this he gives us as a Light to guide us, and woe be to them who call this Light Darkneſs. The Knowledge which it teaches us is ſo ſublime and excellent, that Man could never have found it out; and then ſo conſonant to Reaſon, that

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'tis impoſſible to conſider of it well, and not approve of it. It firſt repreſents Man to himſelf, informing him of his Weakneſs and Miſery, then comforts him; and no ſooner diſcovers his Diſeaſe to him, but offers him a Remedy againſt it. It contains many Revelations and Predictions, confirm'd, after a long Succeſſion of Time, by certain Events, whoſe end is the Salvation of the Creature, and the glorifying of the Creator. The Naturalneſs, the End, the Stile, the Antiquity, the Strength, the Duration, and divers other Marks, which eminently appear in it, do ſo clearly prove it's Divinity, that it ſeems to be God himſelf who ſpeaks; Man therefore muſt attend and be ſilent. Has the Truth of any Hiſtory of the greateſt and moſt flouriſhing Empires, been ſo much ſtrengthned by its Friends, as this has even by its Enemies? What other begins with the World, continues from Age to Age, ſpeaks of things to come, as if preſent, and ends with the World it ſelf? 'Tis the way of Salvation, the Gate of Heaven; and he who endeavours to enter by any other, is a Thief. 'Tis the model of Perfection, that ſhews us of what Good or of what Ill we are capable, and teaches us to examine, to know, and reform our ſelves. 'Tis the true Paradiſe, where grows the Tree of Life, whoſe Leaves are for the Health of the *Gentiles*.

To conclude, they are the Words of the Almighty, writ by him, and equally dispens'd to his Servants and Friends, being neither kept or hid from any one of those who belong to his Election. Whoever then knows that there are Holy Scriptures for to instruct men how they ought to serve God, and what Recompence they may hope for, and does not carefully consult 'em, whatever Profession he may make of Religion, is a Lyar, a Hypocrite, and deceives himself; since they are writ as well for the meaner sort as the greatest Doctor; for Women as Men; and for Children as their Fathers. If there be any, who having once read 'em, though out of Curiosity perhaps, and are not so taken with 'em as to read 'em continually, 'tis a very ill Sign. Is it to deal fairly, or indeed, Is it not to declare they receive the Devils Wages, and take his part to prevent the Salvation of men when they forbid the reading of 'em to so many pious Souls who thirst after the Word of Eternal Life? Let *Hereticks* and *Turks* conceal the Falseness of their Doctrines and Errors, but let the Gospel of Jesus Christ, being Truth it self, be expos'd and visible to all; let it shine as the Day, that spiritual things may be as evident to our Understanding, as corporeal are.

But, perhaps 'twill be said, What need have we of so much Reading and Study, since the Church does appoint what is necessary

ceſſary for us, and that ſuch who cannot err do guide us? But, I ſay, there can be no greater Error than to perſwade us that we cannot err; for this indeed, is boldly to attribute to our ſelves, a divine Property, incommunicable to Men, unleſs to the Prophets and Apoſtles; and they only by the Commiſſion they had to declare the Word they receiv'd, and publiſh what was truly reveal'd to 'em. Perhaps, the Word of God is not to be underſtood without *Plato* and *Ariſtotle*: But I ſay, the Wiſe Men of the World are ſo far from this Knowledge, as their Wiſdom is folly before God, which makes 'em as obſtinately and with as much Violence reſiſt the Motions of the Holy Ghoſt, as one Contrary does the other. It may be urg'd again, that 'tis but a fragment, a part, an imperfect Rule, inſufficient to lead us to Salvation. But I ſay, That there is no Man either ſo ſimple, or dull, who from hence is not enabled to learn more than the beſt Saint can practiſe; for there is no one ſo good, who comes not ſhort of the Perfection that is here propos'd.

Methinks I hear theſe wilfully ignorant men complaining of the difficulty of a Knowledge they have never ſearch'd into; as if the knowing the ways of Salvation did not belong to 'em.

They uſe to urge, out of a religious Scruple, they are not worthy to read it. 'Tis

true, you are not worthy of the Grace of God, but ſince he is pleas'd to beſtow it on you, who will you have to receive it for you? He is ſuſpected by you, his Word is dangerous, and to be fear'd; he has declared and inſpired it only to enſnare your Souls, to deceive and deſtroy 'em: You pretend you know your Weakneſs, and you ſhould wreſt the ſence of it; confeſs rather your own Perverſeneſs, and that you will turn that into Poyſon, which others, that you know, do into Honey. You call that Word dark, the firſt of which, made Light; that ſpiritual Lamp which was given us to no other end, but to enlighten us. You underſtand not that Word which the very Rocks did, that Word which rais'd not only the Dead to Life, but ſummon'd them who were not, as if they were; that Word which commanded Nothing to produce Something, and that Nothing obey'd. Confeſs then, that you are leſs ſenſible than the Rocks, the Dead, or Nothing it ſelf. This is the Natural Effect of the Counſel, and thoſe Inſtructions you receiv'd from your Teachers, who, to make their own Precepts the more eſteem'd, vilifie the Scripture. Its Purity ſerves not their Ambition, and not daring to accuſe it of Falſhood, charge it with Obſcurity; and becauſe they cannot poſitively contradict, they miſinterpret it for their own Purpoſes: and tho' it's full of Prohibitions, neither to add to, or ſubſtract any thing from

from it, yet they are not content to lay heavy Impoſitions on the Conſciences of men, and load them with new Humane Ordinances, which make the State of the Goſpel more intolerable than that of the Law; but their Inſolence and Boldneſs are ſo exorbitant, as to retrench the Commandments of the Law, though the Reverence due to God, who writ 'em with his own hand, ought to have ſecured 'em from that Sacrilege, and have render'd 'em for ever inviolable. Theſe men ſtudy Divinity, only to quarrel the Scriptures, and paſs for learned men in 'em, without having read 'em; and before they have read 'em, being prepoſſeſſed with the Sence of the Schools, they judge 'em with Prejudice: After which, 'tis very hard to take any other Impreſſion, than that which they receiv'd in their Youth; and then, with what Folly does the Devil ſeduce the minds of men, that they who proceed in ſuch a Method, ſhould be thought wiſe and knowing?

There are, 'tis true, myſterious Prophecies, that were not underſtood by thoſe who deliver'd 'em; the Knowledge of 'em was reſerved for ſuch that ſhould ſee their Accompliſhment. There is no one Paſſage in Scripture that threatens Eternal Damnation to thoſe who don't clearly interpret the *Revelations*, and we may attain to Salvation, without being fully acquainted with the meaning of the Viſions of *Ezekiel*, and the

other

other Prophets. I will farther add, that the Predictions, Threats, and Promiſes, the full diſcovery of which neceſſarily depends on the future, do imprint certain *Ideas* upon us, of terrible pains prepar'd for the Wicked, and of a glorious Reward and felicity for the Good. Thoſe things we underſtand, certifie us of the truth of what we do not underſtand; and when the Reader does meet with clear Texts, by which he cannot explain others, he muſt humble himſelf, confeſs his Ignorance or Incapacity, and ſo put a ſtop to his Preſumption. However it is, there is no one but may there diſcover ſuch Commands as he ought to obey, the Belief he ought to hold, a pattern of ſuch Prayers and Thankſgivings which he ought to make to God Almighty. And this indeed is all our Preachers have to direct us in, without perplexing our Minds with nice and intricate Queſtions, or diſturbing us and themſelves with their vain, impertinent Thoughts. But let us beware of belying our ſelves, in ſaying this Word is clear and eaſie, becauſe the Doctors of the Age urge the contrary, and the People believe it. No, no, 'tis truly very difficult and obſcure; Jeſus Chriſt himſelf does teſtifie it, but eſpecially to the Learned. He gives thanks to his Father that he has hid theſe things from 'em, and reveal'd 'em to little Children. 'Tis obſcure to ſuch who are caſt away, and whoſe eyes the God of this World has

has ſhut. Let us boldly confeſs, 'tis not to be underſtood barely by Humane Reaſon, We want the aſſiſtance of a Divine Spirit, to make us have clear conceptions of ſo Divine a Word. Thoſe who have not this Spirit cannot certainly comprehend it: the Children of God only know the Voice of their Father, and only thoſe of the Flock know that of the Shepherd. Let us acknowledge, that too great a luſtre does make it ſeem obſcure to a great part of thoſe who look on it; only the generous and legitimate Eagles can fixedly behold this Sun, but the Owls and Birds of Darkneſs become blind by its light.

CHAP. VI.

'TIS not to be doubted, but that the chief Enemy of God, the firſt Author of univerſal Rebellion, the great Tyrant of the World, does, by all Methods imaginable, promote his own Worſhip, and then no wonder that the moſt part of Religions are Worldly and Diabolical. He cares not how, or by whom they are inſtituted, whether introduced by Ignorance, Opinion, Abuſe, or Cuſtome, ſo they are but alike Profane and Superſtitious; whether thoſe who at firſt adored *Bel* or *Jupiter*,

Jupiter, do afterwards worſhip the Sun, the Moon, the whole Hoſt of Heaven, or of Hell. There is no Religion ſo extravagant, which he does not favour; nor is there any one diſpleaſing to him, but the true. He hath firſt added Gods to Gods, carry'd their Idols to the Holy place, and then hath found out wayes of oppoſing the Scripture by Scripture, and by untrue Interpretations on it, created falſe Beliefs. He hath ſerved himſelf of the Light, only to dazle, and of Truth, to diſguiſe falſhood, the better to put off his Impoſtures. He has his Learned men to teach and diſpute, his Profeſſors of Religion to give Examples of living well; his Prieſts, his Prophets, Martyrs and Confeſſors. And yet men are not ſenſible by what Spirit they are led, ſo obdurate are they, and given up to Satan; they are ſo fully poſſeſs'd with, and infatuated by him, that they ſcarce think that he is. They are ſo profane and preſumptuous, have ſo mighty an Opinion of their own Natural Reaſon, that they pretend to reform the Works of their Maker, and to judge of the Word of God, as if barely Humane; They content not themſelves with what they learn from Divinity, without the aid of Philoſophy, and confound both the one and the other; and thus, inſenſibly forſaking the Profeſſion of Chriſtians, become as Heathens. They employ themſelves in the ſearch of nice and curious Queſtions, and

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not regarding what is clear and evident, take a pride in raiſing Doubts and Scruples; and in a collection of Contradictions, and affected Difficulties, pervert themſelves and others from the knowledge of the Truth. They take, when they pleaſe, figurative Expreſſions literally; they make the worſt Interpretations on thoſe things that are obſcure and doubtful; and when they meet with Words of a double Senſe, they be ſure take that which ſuits beſt with their Intereſt and Deſigns. They puzzle each other with ſpecious Reaſons, and their Judgment is ſo weak as to allow, that two Contradictories may be maintain'd by equal Proofs. One would believe they learn, that they may be more ignorant, and that they ſtudy to be Scepticks; and by theſe means, they make Knowledge of leſs Value than Ignorance it ſelf.

In Effect, if Humane Knowledge was grounded on any Certainty, thoſe who pretend ſo perfectly to underſtand the Art of reaſoning well, would be all of the ſame Belief: but if their Opinions are ſo very different, and divided, and yet that there is but one Truth; in what can they be ſo underſtanding? in a certain crabbed, knotty artificial Divinity only, full of Metaphyſical Terms, which neither the Prophets, or Apoſtles judg'd neceſſary to Salvation, or rather, have not at all known; and of which, according

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ing to their Example, 'tis much better to be ignorant than knowing.

In Humane Inventions, in *Chimæra's* and odd Pictures, and indeed, in all things capable of producing Errors, and of deſtroying Reaſon by its own ſubtilty, you meet with ſome who are always vainly prating, eternal Diſputants, that employ their whole ſtudy in contradicting others, and who are concern'd more for a falſe Syllogiſm, than for the Peace of the Church, or the Happineſs of the World. They never engage in any Conference, but with a reſolution not to yield in the leaſt for the love of the Truth, but only to endeavour either to ſeduce their Adverſaries by all manner of perſwaſions and promiſes, or at leaſt, to ſupplant 'em by Artificial Stratagems. They fear nothing ſo much as granting one Point, leſt then they ſhould be obliged to allow all. If any of 'em does in the leaſt yield, he loſes all his Credit with his Party; and if ſincere but in one act, 'twill be look'd on by 'em as an unpardonable fault. They are alwayes armed with the fallacious Arguments of the Schools, and Proofs grounded on certain Maxims which they lay down, and oblige them to maintain, as Principles of unqueſtionable Truth, which muſt admit of no Doubt, or endure any Examination; and on theſe depend the infallible conſequence of what they believe, or what they endeavour to perſwade us

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to: For, though their Impoſtures are apparent, yet they ſo diſguiſe 'em as to make 'em plauſible, that they may keep the People, by their pious Cheats, in their impious Devotions.

They know how to take the advantage of the Enemy, they are well skill'd in ſhifting the moſt formal Aſſertions, they ſubtilly refine the very ſubſtance of the Matter, and the ſtate of the Queſtion; they have their Sophiſtical Diſtinctions, their ſet Comments, their Evaſions and Defeats; and thus every one in their Diſputes, as in War, aims only at Conqueſt. Execrable Souls! who regard more the defence of their Honour and Intereſt, than their Religion it ſelf, and who look after what they are to object, or anſwer, rather than what they ought to believe; who value not their want of Faith, provided they appear not to be void of Reaſon. Why ſhould we hope from theſe men for a candid and faithful Interpretation of the moſt hidden things, who only endeavour to render more obſcure thoſe which are clear and evident; and who ſo change the Ordinances of God, that 'tis eaſie to diſcover it; for, with the aſſiſtance even of common ſence, our Eyes alone may be juſt Judges of it? But we are not to expect other fruits from their Animoſity or Obduratenes, who are only free and ſociable with thoſe who

who ſuffer themſelves to be inſtructed, or wholly govern'd by 'em: For they are not capable of knowing more, having, as they preſume, learn't all they can, and propoſing to themſelves only the teaching of others, are pleas'd to be rather eſteem'd the Maſters of Error, than the Diſciples of Truth.

But 'twill be asked me, if in a Conſideration of ſo great weight as this, I can pretend, without Preſumption, that my Opinion herein is infallible, or at leaſt, more enlighten'd than that of the Learned themſelves. I anſwer, that I profeſs to embrace no other than what is eſtabliſh'd on the clear Evidence of Scripture, intelligible by the meaneſt of men, and which it has pleas'd God to reveal to the humble, and hide from the proud. No other than that by which I am taught, that no one ought to preſume beyond what is written, 1 *Cor.* 4.6. That 'tis abſolutely forbid either to add, or take from it; that thoſe who promote God's Honour and Service, barely by humane Doctrines, do it in vain; and by their Traditions, make the Law of no effect. No other than that which preſſes me to avoid profane Queſtions, vain and impertinent Diſputes, and unreaſonable Contradictions, of a Knowledge, falſly ſo called, which 'tis difficult to purſue, without erring from the Faith, and becoming even impious. Beſides, I anſwer, that theſe Demands cannot be juſtly propos'd to thoſe who

who ſerve themſelves only of their Senſe and Reaſon, to know the Voice of their Lord and Father, to receive his Commands, and obey him; who preſume not boldly to intermine their own idle Conceits with his Ordinances, and who expound the Scripture but by it ſelf. 'Tis from the unbounded Curioſity, and ſublime Viſions of theſe Angelical, Seraphick, enlighten'd Doctors, ariſe ſo many extravagant Opinions; and not from the innocent reading of ordinary men, who in the Words of eternal Life, ſeek after nothing but ſuch Light as may direct 'em in the ways of Repentance and Salvation. There are none eſteem'd the Authors of Hereſies, but thoſe who preſume they are able to defend 'em; who by the ſame Spirit of Pride and Confidence they propos'd 'em, maintain them. Theſe are Errors then, which the Learned can only pretend to, and Follies, which the Wiſe can only commit; the Vanity of knowing what others know not, the Reputation of having firſt diſcover'd ſome new Invention, the giving a Name to ſome Sect, and being it's Head; the Terrors of Poverty, a thirſt after Honour and Riches; a deſire to pleaſe the Great men of the World, to merit their Favours, to flatter their Paſſions, to carry on their Intereſt, for the Advancement of their own, are thoſe Conſiderations which contain the ſecret Articles, and chief Myſteries of their Faith. They willingly

ly abandon whatever concerns the Intereſt of their Souls for the advantage of their Bodies; they deſire that Religion ſhould ſubmit to Fortune, and Conſcience to Neceſſity. Error is no ſooner broach'd, than there are thoſe found who receive, and promote it; not out of Devotion, but from a Deſign of making ſome new Party in a Quiet Government, and thence to create trouble and confuſion. *Europe* is ſo divided into Sects, and torn in pieces by the violence of ſo many Factions, that hereupon the Atheiſts increaſe, the *Mahometans* are confirmed in their Errours, the *Jews* ſcandalized, and all equally harden'd. This does not happen from Queſtions ſometimes concerning the Elect, and at others of the Reprobate, but from the inconſiderateneſs of thoſe who enquire after Reaſons thereof, when ſo great an Apoſtle as St. *Paul* found none, but the good Will and Pleaſure of God. I confeſs, I cannot ſufficiently wonder at thoſe, who ingratefully ſlight thoſe things which God is pleas'd to make known to us, ſo raſhly to ſearch after ſuch, which, for ſome time, he thinks fit to hide from us; without being too indiſcreetly preſumptuous, without not only an impertinent, but dangerous Curioſity. I will not diſturb the Publick Quiet, by raiſing freſh Doubts concerning the two Natures, the two Wills, or the Subſtance of Jeſus Chriſt, without too great a love of my ſelf;

I will not pretend to be the Comforter, with *Montanus*, nor the Saviour of Men, with *Menander*; I will live as a Believer, with the Faithful; not ſcandalizing my Brethren, either by a too particular Opinion of my own ſufficiency, or by a contempt of that of others.

So long as the Weakneſs of Men ſhall introduce in the Church no other Scruples but what are made concerning Meats, or ſuch like; ſo long as no other Ornaments are uſed but flat Pictures, that they provoke not the Jealouſie of God by emboſs'd Images; ſo long as they uſe only ſome ſuperfluous Ceremonies, which in the judgment of many, are ſometimes indifferent, and at others neceſſary, although that Errour which ſeems at firſt ſight but ſmall, is, for the moſt part, a degree to a greater; ſo long as the ſtate of the Church, though not ſo pure as might be wiſh'd for, yet is at-leaſt tolerable, I will not forſake its Communion; but I will withdraw my ſelf from all thoſe Aſſemblies where I ſhall be forc'd to conform to the External Acts of Superſtition or Idolatry, and to yield a Religious Worſhip, not only to Saints, and to Angels, who are fellow-ſervants with us, but Wood and Stone; where the Sacraments are but partially adminiſtred, and where the Commandments of God are deſtroy'd by thoſe of men. And I ſhall not believe, that there can be any Schiſm;

Schism, where there is so just an occasion to separate; and indeed, where 'tis impossible to do otherwise. For what Sense can those words bear, which oblige the Faithful to forsake the Camp, *Heb.* 13. 13. or *Babylon*, *Rev.* 18. 4. and not only by their Minds, but their Bodies too, since as well the one as the other are consecrated to the Glory of their Creator? And when we see *the Abomination of Desolation set up in the Holy place*, *Dan.* 9. 27. ought we not to *flye to the Mountains*, *Mat.* 24. 15, 16. And if Antichrist be once plac'd in the Church of God, shall we obey him, and call his Commands those of the Church? I will go out then from this Confusion, and conform my self to the Order and Discipline of the true Spouse of Jesus Christ, though in secret, in the midst of her Enemies, retired; tho' I follow her to the Wilderness, and search her in the clefts of the Rocks and Caverns; tho' she appears not glorious but by Persecution, and amidst her sufferings, she shines with no Scarlet, but that of the Blood of Martyrs; whether the Storm be over, or her Tears wiped off, that her Voice may be heard, and her Face seen.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

OBſerving the univerſal Diviſion of ſo many Sects, each of which, had it's Teacher and Head, and ſome their Prophets, I believed it highly neceſſary, to make our Applications to God by Prayer, to humble our ſelves, and ſeriouſly conſult, not the uncertain Imaginations of men, but the infallible Rules which God himſelf hath taught us; I was the more ſollicitous for the Performance of theſe things, becauſe God, by his Word, has fore-warned us, that not only many Antichriſts ſhall ariſe in the Church, and ſome one above the reſt, but alſo, that from the time of the Apoſtles, the *Myſtery of Iniquity* was ſet up, and was conſequently to be advanc'd, notwithſtanding the Blindneſs of thoſe who would not ſee it, and who ſearch for Pretences for their voluntary Ignorance: I look'd therefore on thoſe Religions as erroneous, which were not purely Evangelical and Divine, which are mix'd with the Inventions of men, and lay all their ſtreſs on Queſtions too ſublime, and not to be reſolved; the Controverſie whereof is too nice and ſubtil. I had a very ill Opinion of thoſe which are introduc'd by Tyranny, or the Sword, which are ſo ill-grounded, that their Profeſſors dare not communicate 'em to others; and to that end, keep the People under a ſottiſh

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and brutal Ignorance. I had no kindneſs for thoſe whoſe Intereſt is ſecular, and whoſe Kingdom is of this World, whatever name of a Church they may take to themſelves, becauſe they invert the Order of Jeſus Chriſt, and preſumptuouſly transform that into a time of Glory which he hath ordained for the Patience of Saints.

Moreover, if we are to credit Univerſal Experience, whatever is ſubject to the government of men does decay, and become as changeable and inconſtant, earlier or later, as they themſelves. Children continue not willingly in the Belief of their Fathers, at leaſt, of their Grand-fathers; Faith is not hereditary, as the Title of an Houſe or an Eſtate. They have only remaining for the moſt part the external Profeſſion, which, taking up either from their Birth or Cuſtom, they eaſily forſake what their perverſe Humours forbid 'em to love, or know; and if they have been initiated in good Principles, they end in bad ones. Thus the Purity of the Goſpel, in whatever Town or Province it has been received, has ſcarce proceeded to the third Generation; and the Apoſtles themſelves lived only in thoſe Churches they founded, Errour inſenſibly creeping into the place of Truth. God already threatned them to extinguiſh their Light, or to transfer it, letting 'em ſee that Faith was not a particular Priviledge to one Place, Family,

ly, or People, and that the Church being Catholick, could not be subjected to the Power of one King, or the Government of one Priest. It is in vain Men pretend to settle a durable State, or find a lasting Sovereign good in this Life; they cannot long endure even Prosperity it self, and the alone way to ruine 'em, is to grant 'em even their own Desires. If our first Parents, placed in Innocence amidst the Fruit and Flowers of a delightful Garden, could not withstand the Persuasions of the Evil Spirit, 'though he took on him only the form of a Serpent, and offer'd 'em but an Apple to tempt 'em; how then shall they who are Sinners by Nature, resist him when he appears as an Angel of Light, and offers them all the Advantages they can possibly desire. 'Tis certain, that the Devil for the most part does seduce men by a Paradise of Pleasures, to cast 'em into the bottomless Abyss of Hell; and 'tis by a Hell of Pains and Afflictions, that God does usually try men, to exalt 'em to the Glory of Paradise. Riches are of so great Disadvantage to their Possessors, that they keep 'em, as a weighty Burthen, from ascending to Heaven. They are so incoherent with the Profession of the Gospel, that he who had the Command of all, and could have employ'd 'em without Abuse, voluntarily makes himself poor, to procure us eternal Salvation, and to make us rich by his Poverty.

In effect, what Hiſtory aſſerts is acknowledg'd by all good men, that the great Preſents of Emperours, and the vaſt Gifts of Lords and Ladies, have been the moſt dangerous and fatal Poyſon that could have been ſpread in the Church: for, from hence Piety began to grow cold, and to yield to the Buſineſs of the Age; and all Chriſtian Vertues were ſoon ſtifled by Luxury and Abundance. Theſe Benefactors who are ſo highly magnifyed, do ſufficiently prove, that they were unacquainted with the Will of Jeſus Chriſt, and with the Calling of his Miniſters, ſince they beſtow on 'em ſuch mighty temporal Riches, as to make 'em Sharers of the Kingdom of this World. Wealth on a ſudden encreaſing ſo much, made thoſe who were true Believers plainly foreſee, that none but the ambitious and covetous; none but ill men would be advanc'd to Preferment in the Church, and that it would be brought to the unhappy Extremity of being govern'd only by it's Enemies.

Since then, I know not by what Permiſſion of Heaven Corruption has been ſo rife, that the Eccleſiaſticks are become worſe than Seculars. They have receiv'd their Authority from men, which they ought to have had alone from God, in ſo religious a Profeſſion; and if they have been concern'd in ſpiritual Affairs, it has been rather to command than ſerve; to raiſe themſelves to great Honours,

Honours, and to make themſelves Biſhops over the reſt of Biſhops. They have imitated him who not ſatisfy'd with the Joys of his Fellow-Angels, boldly aſpired to the utmoſt height of Pride, ſaying, in his Heart, *I will raiſe my Throne above the Stars, and ſhall be made like to the Almighty.* Inſtead of a due Obſervation of that Worſhip and Service God himſelf has appointed, they have deſpis'd it's Simplicity, affecting Pomp and Bravery in their Devotions, (and as they ſay themſelves) ſanctifying the Ceremonies of *Paganiſm*, by introducing of 'em into the Church. Not being able to endure the Purity of Doctrine, without altering and diſguiſing of it into a thouſand Shapes, they have, to this purpoſe, made choice of Preachers after their own faſhion, who raiſing nice and ſcrupulous Queſtions, have underſtood 'em as little as their Hearers: and whatever Colour of Senſe they may bear, being pronounc'd in elegant and florid Words, they both ſeem equally ſatisfy'd. We have ſeen, that poor Worms, juſt riſen from the Duſt, and ready to return thither again, have inſolently taken upon them the Title of Gods, and commanded the very Angels as their Guards, and have diſpos'd of Heaven and Hell at their Pleaſure, as of their Eſtates. But what likelyhood is there, that thoſe who are rais'd only by Corruptions, by Bribery, by Threats, Promiſes, or private Bargains,

ſhould be the infallible Diſpenſers of God's Will, and Judges of Men's Faith? What Patience would not be tyred to ſee thoſe who are alone guided by the Spirit of Intereſt, who make the Church an Houſe of Trade and Den of Thieves, tranſported to ſuch heights of Impiety, as to make the Holy Ghoſt an Accomplice of all their Crimes? Their Pretences of having Power in Heaven makes 'em ſeem to affect leſs the Good of the Earth, that we may believe, that the Divine Authority and theirs are equal. But as they are Lyons in Gruelty, ſo are they Horſeleeches for Covetouſneſs, being always finding out new Methods of laying numberleſs Impoſitions on the People. For, to paſs by their ſeveral Excommunications, Injunctions, transferring of Cauſes, and Exactions, under pretence of War againſt the Enemies of Chriſtianity, there is no end of their firſt Fruits, Bulls, Indulgences, Canons, Caſes of Conſcience, Pardons for Faults, and Penances, and ſuperabundant Satisfactions. All theſe Inventions make Sins venial ſo far as they are vendible; for they ſet to ſale, their Prayers, Sacrifices, and proſtitute even Heaven and God himſelf; ſo that he that offers moſt has the Bargain. Horrid Inventions, that transform *Simon Peter* into *Simon Magus!* who make (as much as in their Power) Jeſus Chriſt a Tyrant, and his Apoſtles Mercenary Huckſters. What Divinity! That thoſe who

who are but able to pay for it, ſhall, in a Moment, be deliver'd from the Torments of Hell, at leaſt, from thoſe of Purgatory, tho' the Sins they have committed are never ſo enormous, whilſt others remain there thouſands of Years, unleſs perchance, Poverty either voluntary or forc'd, or Faſtings, even to the murdering of themſelves, or ſome other ſort of Severities of Nakedneſs or whipping do redeem 'em! But beſides this ſpiritual Merchandize, and expoſing things ſacred to Sale, by what divine Inſpiration do they abſolve Subjects of their Oaths of Fidelity, and diſpenſe with their Allegiance to their lawful Princes, whom they endeavour rather to terrifie than reform; and that dreadful Inquiſition which renders 'em deaf to the juſt Remonſtrances of thoſe who breath after Reformation only, is it an Imitation of the Meekneſs and Clemency of Jeſus Chriſt, or of the barbarous Cruelty of *Herod*, who put to Death ſo many Innocents, leſt he ſhould miſs of him who was Innocence it ſelf?

O God! How long wilt thou ſuffer the Children of Pride to reign, who make Religion but a Maſque, and uſe thy Name only to render the People willingly tributary? How long wilt thou endure that horrible Scandal theſe men give to the Gentiles, who have yet ſome ſhadow of Reſpect for the Law thou thy ſelf haſt pronounced! and ſeeing the Objects of thy Jealouſie, carved Images

in the Churches, and the Festivals with which they are honour'd, the religious Offices paid to 'em, believe this is by the Command of thy Christ, and that Christians do worship as many Men as the Heathens did Gods? When wilt thou by the Breath of thy Mouth destroy those, who with as much Insolence as Hypocrisie, abuse the People by their Impostures, which even the *Jews* and *Atheists* discover, and from thence believe Religion a Trick, since it's proved only by false and counterfeit Miracles? Upon this account, we must have Recourse to thy Sovereign Power; for, we endeavour but in vain to convince 'em, having so extraordinary an Opinion of themselves, pretending to a Knowledge from Heaven it self, that they believe their Sense is far beyond that of other men; that their Thoughts are the immediate Dictates of Reason; and that whatever Impressions they receive, is from the mouth of Truth it self. If the *Heathens* did with that Violence resist the Gospel, and the Knowledge of the true God offer'd to 'em, those who had no other Gods, but such as Men made; what Opposition is to be expected from those who shrowd themselves under the Authority of God himself? who believe themselves possess'd of all Right, both humane and divine; and that to the end of the World, all Power is given 'em both in Heaven and Earth; and, who under the

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empty Title of a Church, make their Errors ſeem fair and plauſible, and thus, too unpuniſh'd paſs their Deceits upon the World; Princes, who at firſt might have prevented theſe Abuſes, have, by I don't know what irreligious Prudence, ſuffer'd them; whether from want of a Knowledge of 'em, or from ſome weighty Cares of State, found themſelves obliged to diſſemble that Knowledge, or that they were conſtrain'd to yield to the Appointment of Heaven, and could not, but in vain, oppoſe the fulfilling of the Prophecies: Prophecies, which having long ſince repreſented to us things as we now ſee 'em, leave in-excuſable ſo many learned men whom Fear or Hope has made ſilent, and who, by their unfaithful ſilence, have ſtrengthned what by a juſt Contradiction they might have render'd weak and invalid; or, who rather indeed have with too great Ingenuity defended Error, which they ought to have buried under an eternal Condemnation.

CHAP. VIII.

THERE is no greater Tyrant in the World, or that makes himſelf more obey'd, than Cuſtom, eſpecially in Matters of Religion; and that which makes it the

more abſolute, is, the Obligations it layes on mens Conſciences, which for fear of erring, are oblig'd to purſue thoſe Rules it at firſt preſcribed: This makes it plain to us, that notwithſtanding the vain preſumption of men, and the good Opinion they have of their own Parts, they are yet ſo naturally weak and infirm, that it ſeems to us that their Soul came not from Heaven, but is purely Senſual, and that all the Perfection which they have attained to, is only an Effect of what they have learn'd. They lay ſo great ſtreſs upon their Birth, Education, or Chance it ſelf, that that which firſt takes with 'em, does ſo ſtrongly engage 'em, that they are made incapable of believing any thing, but that of which they were firſt perſuaded. Upon this account I have endeavour'd, as much as poſſible, to diſpoſſeſs my ſelf of thoſe impreſſions were made on me in my Youth, to look on 'em as altogether foreign, that the Truth might be the ſole Object of my Faith, and that Cuſtom might not tyrannically prevail over my Reaſon. Then I have always thought, that he ought not to be truly valued as Man, who was byaſs'd by the courſe of the World, who was not in ſome ſort infinitely above the Advice that is commonly given him; who was ſo weak and mean-ſpirited, as to abandon his own Judgment, and ſuffer himſelf to be enſlav'd by Popular Error. But men, approving

ving for the moſt part, of ſuch things only to which they have been us'd; and judging according to their cuſtomary Practice, have contracted ſo ill an habit, that to remedy it is extreamly difficult, the very faculties of the Mind being ſeized, which ſhould be employed to deliver 'em from it; they have certain Notions ſo deeply imprinted on 'em, that they become natural; and paſs for Reaſon it ſelf: they know nothing elſe, they underſtand no other Language, and without changing their very Nature, they cannot alter their Belief.

They are not ſenſible, that inſtead of maintaining the Truth they defend only the firſt Opinion they have receiv'd, without examining whether it be as true as pleaſing to 'em; whether grounded on Prejudice, on ſpecious Pretences, probable Gueſſes, or wordly Conſiderations. They conſider not, that all Sects whatever, claim the ſame Advantage, that all Hereſies have ſome who take their part, and with equal Paſſion promote 'em; have their learned Patrons, who think they ought not to yield the one to the other, either in Opinion or Knowledge. They reflect not how ſtrangely they are tranſported with a fond Love of themſelves, that perſuades 'em they mightily differ from their own kind; that they have a much better Conception of things than others; that they are enlightened by ſome Divine Pow-

er, whilſt others have ſcarce Humane Underſtanding. Then they proceed, Nothing is ſo true, or to be ſo eaſily comprehended, as what they believe. The proof of it is clear, and it's Demonſtration infallible; He that perceives not this, knows nothing Reaſon is conſtantly on their ſide, but Error and Obſtinacy on that of their Adverſaries: What unaccuſtom'd madneſs and blind Rage, or what Pride keeps 'em from ſeeing, that even thoſe whom they wonder at, look on them with Amazement; and that they are ridiculous to thoſe they laugh at; and that they only ſeem to pity thoſe, who have a real pity and compaſſion on them? Ought they not, obſerving the great Uncertainty of things, and the frailty of mens Parts, apply themſelves to univerſal Principles, and firmly adhere to the Commands of the ſovereign Law-giver, who expreſsly forbids us to turn either to the right or to the left?

But they are ſo far prepoſſeſs'd with what the World preſents 'em; the Concerns of this Life have ſo blinded their Judgment, that they take no Care to inform themſelves better, or do they conſider, that neither Time, or Country, or any thing whatever, can proſcribe againſt the Truth; beſides this, they are captivated with the Belief of their Parents, their Examples at home, with the multitude and Antiquity it ſelf, which we cannot but attribute to Error, which has ſo in-

inſenſibly crept in amongſt us, and has been advanc'd, from Time to Time, to the height of Power, that it's Enemies, in oppoſing of it, have been utterly foyl'd, or at leaſt, very much baffl'd. 'Tis very difficult, without doubt, to condemn our Country or our Prince; to ſpeak againſt our Anceſtors, our neareſt Friends or Relations; nay, even againſt thoſe who have taught us: but the Buſineſs is, we muſt ſtrive to diſingage our ſelves from the Falſhood of mens vain Imaginations, to juſtifie Truth againſt the Teſtimony of it's many Enemies; to repair the Decays of an almoſt-ſpent Life; to ſeek after our chief Good and Happineſs; to give our Aſſents to the Words of him that ſays, *Thoſe who love Father or Mother, or any thing elſe better than him, are not worthy of him.* But for all this, they perſiſt in their Reſolutions of following the Example of thoſe worthy men whoſe Authority they urge, not conſidering, that even the *Turks* can at leaſt ſay thus much for themſelves, and the Heathens more. But, they chooſe to ſtick to theſe falſe Principles, rather than to give themſelves the Pains of examining into the beſt Doctrine can be propoſed to 'em. Then they are, as it were, liſted and enſlav'd to live and dye, and ſubmit to the Tyrannical Power of certain Guides, who tell 'em they cannot err, that the Spirit of God does neceſſarily aſſiſt in their Aſſemblies and Determinations; that

their Power is abſolute; and beſides all this, can reconcile Religion with the Advantages of the World: Oft thus they very eaſily ſuffer themſelves to be perſuaded, it being moſt agreeable to their Inclinations, and for the accompliſhment of their Deſigns. They are pleas'd to hear others ſlander'd, and hug themſelves to ſee thoſe convicted of Error, who talk to 'em of Truth: She is ſuſpected by 'em, they dare ſcarce look on her, leſt being conquer'd by her Beauty, they find themſelves obliged to court her, or to ſuffer ſome juſt Diſpleaſures on her Account, which they are unwilling to ſubmit to. The Truth of it is, they are wilfully ignorant of thoſe Principles they will not put in Practice, finding a certain Satisfaction and Quiet in their Ignorance, that Law, though never ſo juſt, which reſtrains their Liberty, is uneaſie to 'em. It is enough, that Afflictions being a neceſſary part of the Goſpel-Diſpenſation, to deter thoſe of this World from it's Profeſſion. They rather yield to the violent Stream that hurries 'em on, than ſtrive againſt it; they had rather be lull'd into a ſoft Sleep, attended by agreeable Dreams, than hear the troubleſome Voice of thoſe who waken 'em only to diſturb 'em. O Britiſh Stupidity! O Apparent Hardneſs! Muſt Vice and Error, becauſe grown common, looſe their Name, and be call'd Vertue and Wiſdom? Muſt Cuſtom be ſo prevalent, as to hinder

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men from being reasonable. But, 'tis not to be doubted, but that those whom the Scripture stiles Drunk, are so great Strangers to their own Senses, so deprav'd in their Understandings, as to take that for true which is false, and that they see not indeed what they see. And 'tis not to be question'd, but that they resemble those who had so long us'd themselves to the eating of Poyson, that at length it was even Meat and Nourishment to 'em.

In the mean while, they have plac'd all sort of Religion in humane Traditions and Superstition; they have not consulted either with Sense or Reason; and I don't know from whence it is, that the greatest part of Men, the most exquisitely curious in other things, make no Search at all after that which is most necessary. Their Knowledge of God is, as that of the *Barbarians*, obscure, barren and insignificant; and had they been born amongst the *Turks*, they would have believ'd as they do, because they have but one Faith, called Acquired, depending on Tradition, that never saved any one. This is that of the Wicked as well as theirs; nay, that of the Devils themselves, who, as these, own a God, and that he is Almighty, that he created the World, and sent his Son; who believe the great Mystery of his Birth, of his Life, and of his Death, and who yet must not pretend to have a share in his Kingdom

dom or Glory. To obſerve the inconſiderate Zeal of a People, who when they pray, are ignorant of what they ſay, is a thing, claims both our Pitty and Horror too; who ſatisfie themſelves with bare Shews, and are led away by ſuch Preachers, who rather thirſt after the Blood of their Neighbours, than deſire their Salvation. A People abus'd with Vanities, imagining, God is better pleas'd in one place than another, and who ſearches amongſt Strangers for what he may find equally amongſt his own. An ignorant and unwiſe People, who ſee not, that under the Goſpel they raiſe (without thinking of it) *Judaiſm* again, againſt what is ſaid in Scripture, *That the time is come, that thoſe who will worſhip God truly, muſt do it in Spirit and in Truth.* And how do either Places or Pilgrimages ſerve in order to this? How do thoſe Acts of Devotions contribute to it, which are looked upon only from their Quantity and not Quality, which are not recommended either from their Faith or Piety, but by certain Tasks they impoſe on themſelves, and by ſome odd Numbers in which they believe great Vertue, and which they vainly affect, as the *Magicians* did of old? Superſtitious Devotions, full of dark and ſcrupulous Doubts, as if they were afraid to know the Truth, and that the very Light was offenſive to 'em; who apprehend nothing of the True Religion, but what is ſaid of it by

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their Enemies, and therefore, hate and ſpeak reproachfully of it, and always repreſent it after the moſt dreadful manner they can imagine. It cannot, certainly, be difficult to perſwade thoſe to what we will, whom we have once brought under a blind Obedience; to which, they yield with as much Eaſe and poorneſs of Spirit, as if they ſaid, we will be ſtupid, we will be ſenceleſs. For, if if they once ſay that they'll follow the Church, they contradict themſelves, and confeſs they embrace what they know: but, what more than an ordinary Knowledge is requir'd to diſcern betwixt what is true and what is falſe? But, why muſt they be blindly obedient, whom God has endu'd with Reaſon, and given his Precepts to 'em with this expreſs Command, *That Fathers inſtruct their Children in 'em, and that all ſearch the Scriptures, the alone means to direct us to the Kingdom of Heaven?* But how can they inform others, who are themſelves ſo ignorant; who, as a juſt Puniſhment on 'em, for adoring Images, are ſo beſotted, as to ask their Adviſe and Counſel; this is to conſult even Stones and Marble.

Ye blind, perceive ye not, that ye become inſenſible, by paying a Veneration to things that are ſo? Underſtand ye not, that even Reaſon tells you, that you are beneath what you worſhip, and yet your depraved Inclinations have made you leſs valuable than the

the works of your own hands? Be not thus childiſh, but leave theſe Babies to Children; they are ridiculous, in a full grown and reaſonable Age. You are not leſs blameable than Atheiſts themſelves, for you, as they, render the Deity insignificant, and of no Uſe, making it material, and repreſenting him who is only Spirit, by a piece of Wood or Stone, notwithſtanding he hath ſo often, in his Jealouſie, ſaid, *To what will you liken Me?* You audaciouſly make him who made you, and moſt ingratefully endeavour to ridicule him, by giving Eyes to him which ſee not, Ears that hear not, Hands that work not, and Feet that are not able to walk. 'Tis poſſible you may pretend, that your good Intentions are an excuſe for your Ignorance; you take ſuch meaſures as are preſcrib'd to you; and in whatever you do, you believe you ſerve God, tho' you don't only perſecute, but murder his Children. Hypocrites, know that under the colour of good Intentions, infinite Abuſes creep into the World, for unleſs they are grounded on holy Writ, they are ſinful. Thus the Children of *Iſrael* were puniſh'd for their want of conſideration, in worſhipping the golden Calf, whilſt they deſign'd the celebrating a Solemn Feaſt to the Eternal. Thus alſo *Nadab* and *Abihu* provok'd him to Anger, and kindled that Fire which conſum'd 'em, when they intended only to offer him Perfumes. Thus *Uzza* was ſuddenly ſlain for having laid his hand

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on the Ark, when falling, tho' he intended to have kept it up. If good Intentions would ſerve, the *Jews* themſelves, Enemies of Jeſus Chriſt, were not guilty; for St. *Paul* gives this teſtimony of 'em, that they had the Zeal of God; then alſo would many wicked Sayings become juſtifiable; and the moſt barbarous Maſſacres wou'd be plac'd amongſt good Works, all ſorts of Religion would be ſafe, and almoſt all men ſaved.

CHAP. IX.

'TIS to no purpoſe therefore to alledge our good Intentions in the Exerciſe of a Religion already furniſh'd with ſufficient Directions and infallible Rules, as alſo reſtrain'd by an abſolute Obedience to 'em. There is no need of other Advice, or farther Inſtructions, where we are in no danger, and cannot act but with certainty; where even our great Maſters in the Profeſſion are no farther authoriz'd than to ſee the Orders of the Church carefully obſerv'd; and thus the Church cannot err. So that thoſe who abuſe themſelves and others with theſe trivial Excuſes, are to be look'd on as Hypocrites, who have never ſeriouſly thought on thoſe things that are Heavenly, but make it their buſineſs only to procure the Advantages of this World. I have conſider'd 'em under all ſorts of conditions, and whe-

whether it be, that the Scripture has foretold it, or that Experience has proved it. I have obſerv'd, that even our great ones have ſeldom any Tincture of true Piety, ſuffering themſelves to be byaſs'd by Faction, rather than Reaſon, taking no Meaſures, but what are ſerviceable to their Intereſt. They make Religion only as a Cloak to their Ambitious Deſigns; and many of 'em enter into Conſpiracies, and lay dangerous Plots againſt their lawful Sovereign, and the Government, under Catholick Pretences. They inſtill a certain Courage and falſe Generoſity, into 'em, even in their Infancy: They rarely diſcourſe to 'em of the Knowledge of God; and beſides a Sermon ſometimes, which they hear with Impatience, they look upon their Converſation who talk to 'em of Religion, or a future State, as uncourtly and troubleſome. They are not deſirous to make any farther Search than their Knowledge already reaches; or, if ſome of 'em pretend to more Light, they forge to themſelves ſome bare Probabilities, to perſwade 'em, that things really are as their Paſſions ſuggeſt 'em to 'em. To contradict 'em would be inſolent; for, being in Power, and poſſeſs'd of Fortunes, they think they are of good Sence too; they back their Opinions with Authority, and make indiſputable Decrees. They cannot bear with that Company which favours not that Love they have of themſelves, or that Con-

verſation which does not flatter their Vanity, and is agreeable to their Sence and Imaginations. They are altogether vain, both in their Diſcourſe and Thoughts: they ſuffer themſelves to be abuſed with the out-ſide and Appearance of things, being ſo pleas'd with empty Shadows, that they will not approve of thoſe things that are moſt ſolid and ſubſtantial, if convey'd to 'em by weak Inſtruments. They would never have received the Law from the mouth of *Moſes*, becauſe of his Imperfection of Speech. Truth muſt be repreſented to them, with Ornament and Splendor, that is, with the Artifices of Falſhood: and, without the Gayety of Eloquence and Rhetorick, we cannot perſwade 'em to any thing, though ſent by God himſelf. If he ſend his own Meſſengers, ſhould he call 'em out from the common people, being either Shepherds or Fiſher-men, they will judge of 'em as the *Phariſees* did of the Apoſtles, whom they look'd on, as contemptible, ſorry Wretches; 'twas well, if they neither ſtoned, maſſacred, baniſh'd or impriſon'd 'em.

There is a Wiſdom in the World made up of Show, of Grimaces, a refin'd Hypocrite, by which, men deceive themſelves and others too; 'tis this makes their Life but as a continual Maſcarade or Comedy, in which, every one repreſents another Perſon than his own, affecting nothing more than

than to appear what really he is not. This incurable Madneſs, which goes under the Name of humane Prudence, does ſo diſorder their Underſtandings, and fills 'em with ſuch idle chimerical Notions, that it incapacitates 'em to comprehend any Divine Truth. They employ themſelves only in ſeeking after thoſe things that are periſhing, not conſidering, that they heap up Goods for thoſe that will riotouſly waſte 'em; and are covetous, only to the making others, either luxurious or prodigal. What Fathers! who either that they are too indulgent to, or that they utterly forſake their Children, ſeem equally to conſult their Ruine; who, whilſt they are afraid of the Vanity of ſome, diſinherit others of their right of Succeſſion; and, before they know what either Concupiſcence or Continency mean, under pretence of devoting 'em to God's Service, baſely ſacrifice 'em to their own Covetouſneſs. What Prudence! which makes the free minds of Men Slaves to their Bodies; who are expert only in flying from their chief Good, ingenious to their own Ruine, and ſubtle to deceive themſelves! 'Twas this caus'd our firſt Parents to loſe that happy State of Paradiſe; and which, inviting men to fancy to themſelves a thouſand ways of living, hath fill'd the Earth with Superſtitions, Idolatries, Sects, Hereſies, and impious Religions. By this, have the Saints been perſecuted

ſecuted, our Saviour crucify'd, it having endeavour'd to promote and defend too many Antichriſts, whoſe Reign muſt be in this World. This it is alſo, that continually oppoſes the holy Spirit, and with Inſolence, dares diſpenſe with his ſacred Word, either by wreſting the Sence, or retrenching it's terms when it cannot ſo diſguiſe 'em, as to make 'em contradictory to it ſelf. This is it which accommodates all to Intereſt, and which their Service being in an untelligible Tongue, from whence the People are kept in Ignorance, their Prayers directed to the Creature inſtead of the Creator: Images bore on mens Shoulders, and ſolemniz'd by Songs, with more ſuch like Actions, or worſe, pretends to make all theſe paſs for ſlight Inconveniences, or things indifferent.

Of all ſorts of Hypocrites, thoſe are the moſt dangerous, who make Piety their Pretence; for, there are none who can ſo eaſily put tricks upon us, as ſuch who make profeſſion of Religion; they having the Reputation of deceiving no one. Some appear to us ſoft and mild, others ſevere and ſtately; and both ways they alike endeavour to recommend their Virtues to us. If their appearing Sweetneſs betrays us, their Haughtineſs contemns us, and the great value they ſet on themſelves, ſuffers 'em to have very little for their Neighbours.

They have the art to appear for ſome time, what their Profeſſion or their Habits oblige 'em to be. But, this forced Goodneſ-

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this ſtudyed Compliance remains no longer than till they are either thwarted in their Intereſt or Opinions. They ſeem mild and gentle, but cann't long diſſemble it; for, being in the leaſt provoked, they ſhew themſelves Lyons and Tygers, which were hid under a Humane Shape. Yet, their Anger, if we may believe 'em, is never rais'd but by Reaſon, and their very Crimes are more juſtifiable, than the beſt Actions of other men. If we look on 'em as Saints, they believe themſelves ſo, and lay claim to it, as a true Reward of their falſe Devotion. This ſhadow of Holineſs, or rather, this glittering Zeal, has ſo often amazed me, that I have conſider'd, that each Nation had it's devout religious Men, and that the auſtere Life of ours, was not to be compar'd with that of the *Cynicks*, the *Pythagoreans*, the *Hierophantes*, or the *Gymnoſophiſts*; and with this difference, that thoſe miſerable *Pagans* worſhipp'd the Devils, as they commanded 'em; but theſe adore the true God after ſuch a Manner as he would not be.

Beſides; Whence is it Men embrace the Principles of Religion, unleſs, from a natural Inclination, which is common to *Barbarians* and *Infidels*; or, from Ambition, to let the World ſee, Government cannot be ſupported but by their Juſtice and Probity? There are ſcarce any do good for the Love of it, each one has his by End, and thoſe who

who act not according to their Duty, for fear of Puniſhment, are engag'd to it by hopes of Honour or Riches. Many have Cunning and Patience enough to conceal their bad Deſigns, till they have obtain'd their deſir'd Ends; but, having rais'd themſelves to the higheſt Pitch they can, and ſtanding in need of no farther Aſſiſtance for their Advancement, diſcover 'em. To this purpoſe, they uſe all Artifices imaginable; they ſpeak the Language of Saints, they write Books, they look grave and demure, they declare many Truths; which frequently provokes me to ſay, Who is it that hath put the Word of God in the Mouths of theſe Men, and who makes us even now find *Saul* amongſt the Prophets? I have attentively heard their Sermons, which are furniſh'd with common Places, with deep and ſerious Meditations; but, they are ſo tragically paſſionate, that they rather become the Theatre than the Pulpit, and are fill'd with all the rhetorical Flowers that Art can ſupply 'em with, either to move or pleaſe. Whatever good Inſtructions may be interlarded in their Diſcourſes, they ſtill cloſely adhere to their ill Principles; for, having no other aim, but the gaining of ſome Preferment to exchange that, and ſo riſe from Dignity to Dignity, they preach Jeſus Chriſt only with Emulation; they bear him witneſs, but as thoſe evil Spirits who confeſs'd that he was

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the Son of God, and going out of one Body, desir'd leave to enter into another. 'Twould be a matter of little weight, if men disguis'd themselves only before men, even to the dissembling of their Dissimulation, if they made not an apparent and publick Profession of their Hypocrisie before God himself. 'Tis this I call that external, out-side Worshlp, that painted Devotion by which they amuse the People with fantastical Gestures, and confus'd Noises they understand not.

Yet, we see with what Heat and Eagerness they defend that which they know not, and which they never will, being pleas'd with an airy Good, rather than with the true substantial Religion; for, that seems but cold and insipid to 'em in comparison of the palpable mysteries of Superstition. Wretched Superstition! pursued with so much Passion, or rather Fury, by so many weak Men and Women, called religious, who are like those who were never at Quiet till they had made a disturbance between those two holy Apostles *Paul* and *Barnabas* They make to themselves a God of very difficult Access, who is never to be satisfy'd, and with whom they have never done; hence proceed all those rash Vows, their Pilgrimages, their numbers of Prayers, and eternal Repetitions. They frequent the Churches more than their Houses, where they go only to torment their Families, which are never pleasing to 'em,

'em, unleſs, in Imitation of 'em they comply with their avaritious Abſtinencies. Under Pretence of an extraordinary Piety, they introduce themſelves into Courts, near ſome devout Perſons, and into the greateſt and richeſt Families; where ſome careſs 'em, others ſuffer 'em, but more are troubled with 'em, complain of 'em, rid themſelves of 'em, and think nothing ſo uneaſie in the World; and thoſe of the beſt Judgment, ordinarily, give 'em the worſt Character. They find they are ignorant, fooliſh, timerous, diſtruſtful, and full of idle Scruples, being, for little or no Reaſon, ſometimes tranſported with Admiration, and then ſeiz'd with Horror, they are provok'd, tormented, amaz'd, only at ſomething that happens beyond their Capacity of underſtanding. Any thing proves what they have a mind to believe; a few cunning Tricks, or a falſe Apparition, paſs with them for Miracles. They are perſwaded to any thing that is unuſual or ſtrange. Counterfeit Jewels are valued by 'em as great Rarities. They often, upon the bare Credit of ſome Cheat, pay as great Reſpect to ſomething that has been brought from a neighbouring Mountain or River, as if it had come from that of *Libanus*, or thoſe of *Jordan*, or the more celebrated Holy Places of *Paleſtine*. I believe, by this time Mount *Calvary* is made plain, at leaſt, is but common Earth and Duſt, all

the Sand and pretty Stones being carryed away, as holy Reliques, to adorn the little Chappels of numbers of devout Virgins, who would believe, they ſhould give but a bad Proof of their good Education, did they not out-do their Mothers themſelves in Superſtition.

Theſe Abuſes are own'd by many, which they forbear not to condemn, and yet practice; ſo that their Actions belye their Words. For, if they are confin'd by any Weakneſs or Infirmity, and would yet be accounted Sons of the Church; Why don't they contribute to it's Neceſſities, to the Relief of the Poor, and it's Paſtors? Or, if their Zeal is not made remarkable, Why don't they, at leaſt, ſo act, that their Idolatry be not apparent? But, if you preſs this Argument home upon 'em, you touch 'em to the Quick, you diſcover the Poyſon within 'em, and ſo far provoke 'em, that they'll not ſuffer you to ſay more; and thus do they diſcover their Hypocriſie. 'Tis not, ſay they, a hundred Years, ſince you were not at all; you are Schiſmaticks; Why did you forſake the Church? But, beſotted as they are, they ſhould add to this, You will not worſhip what is elevated on the Altar, or believe, that God can be made of a little Morſel of Bread: You will not proſtrate your ſelves before the likeneſs of any thing that is in Heaven or in Earth? and you are ſcandaliz'd, that

that the People pay ſuch a ſubmiſſive Reſpect to Images and Reliques, with Songs of Praiſe and Devotion. You preſume ſo far, as fully to receive the Sacrament in both kinds, as Jeſus Chriſt has inſtituted; and will not be contented with that part only the Church allows you: You will underſtand the Scriptures, the Prayers you make to God, and all the religious Service you are obliged to render to him. In a word, you will not ſubmit to the Authority of the Learned, after the Example of Princes and Governours, or be enſlaved either by Tradition or Cuſtom. Certainly, they believe Religion does principally conſiſt in the Succeſſion of Perſons, and not in the Doctrine of the Goſpel. I can only ſay of 'em, that they own the Truth but by bare Humane Reaſon, that they are zealous neither for one Party or other, but cloſe with that which is moſt to their Advantage, not conſidering, that the Scripture does condemn the Luke-warm, as well as Murderers and Adulterers. I am obliged here, to confeſs my own Weakneſs in accuſing theirs, and to acknowledge, that I ſometimes look on 'em with Pity, at others, with Anger, and then with Indifference; but, I cannot think on ſuch who have forſaken the Faith, without Horror, as being the woſt of men, the lively Images of the firſt and chief Apoſtate. Theſe men betray their very Brethren, ſell their Religion, are a

Scandal to the whole World, making it more their Buſineſs to enrich than to ſave themſelves.

Give 'em the Purſe, and they'll continue with you, as *Judas*, who foreſaw not, as theſe, that in ſelling his Maſter he bought his own Deſpair. Having never had any real Inclinations to the gain of Knowledge, they have always neglected the procuring it, whilſt they have made an outward Profeſſion of the true Religion; but having alter'd their Belief, they become mighty Diſputants, and cunning in the Defence of their Change. To this purpoſe, they ſerve themſelves of all the Reaſons that can be thought of, though in their Conſciences they know they have none, but the weakneſs of their Judgment, the natural Depravity of their Minds, or the difficulty they have to reconcile their Ambition and Covetouſneſs with the Diſgrace and Poverty of Jeſus Chriſt. Then, the Promiſes and Favours of great men, have irreſiſtable Charms, with which, theſe men of mercenary Tempers, eaſily comply; whilſt thoſe who us'd to command, now court 'em, their very Maſters careſs and flatter 'em. In a word, the greateſt part of Mankind ſeem born to Slavery; to which, though never ſo full of Hardſhip, if bound to it by golden Chains, they ſubmit, nay, prefer it before the Chriſtian Liberty. They are ready even to adore thoſe by whom they enrich themſelves, or where

where they meet with Honour and Reſpect; and, as the Heathens, own no other Gods but their Benefactors.

CHAP. X.

AMongſt ſo many bewitch'd or crazed Perſons, the wilfully blind, and Slaves of the World, I have ſought for ſome, in whom I might confeſs to have found ſuch a Purity of Mind, and ſuch marks of their Election, that I might have joyn'd with 'em in the Communion of the Spirit, and by that Bond of Perfection, which makes 'em inſeparable from their Creator, and their Neighbour. For, what Satisfaction or Comfort could I find with the men of the Age, before whom we muſt never, it being indecent (from whence I know not) to diſcourſe of Religion; they either talk not at all of Divine things, or if they do, 'tis after a Humane way? What Pleaſure could I have in their Friendſhip, who heartily differed from me in that which ought to be the chief end of all our Deſires and our Hopes? I endeavour'd to know the Children of Heaven from thoſe of the Earth; and the meeting one of the Faithful would have been as an Angel to me. But, amongſt ſuch Numbers of men, I could not meet with one,

though I earneſtly labour'd after it, being without doubt, leſs diſcerning than *Elijah*, who ſaw not one in all *Iſrael*, where yet there were many.

I happen'd in an Age, in which, the men of it did even already degenerate from the firſt Simplicity and late Reformation; in which, thoſe who ſtyled themſelves of the Reform'd Religion, follow'd their very ſteps who have deſtroy'd the moſt flouriſhing Churches. For, they uſed the ſame liberty in their Words and Actions, the ſame ſuperfluous Vanity in their Cloaths, the ſame luxurious way of living, which ſcandaliz'd the Emperour *Julian*, and confirm'd him in his Apoſtacy. *Matth.* 24. 12. *Iniquity did ſo abound, that the love of many waxed cold.* And to judge of 'em by their outward Behaviour, thoſe who were falſe Chriſtians, could not be diſtinguiſh'd from the true.

I thought no where ſo proper to find thoſe I ſought for, as in the moſt lawful Aſſemblies; but I could not diſcover the Church, even in the Church, that being frequented by certain Perſons, whoſe higheſt Devotion conſiſts in their Looks; who never think the Sermon too long, or their Meetings too often; who would look upon Religion as too cold, did it not in ſome Acts imitate even Superſtition. It is indeed too much fill'd with thoſe who come only for Company; 'tis their Education or Chance, that draws 'em

'em thither, rather than any hearty desire of improving themselves in the knowledge of the Truth. Hither they come, only to see the World, from whence, the World, in some sort, ought to be banish'd; where they behave themselves with so little Respect, that 'twould be Injustice to call 'em Hypocrites, since there is no manner of Appearance either of their Zeal or Devotion.

Their only Aim is to be seen in the most known and publick Places, instead of giving God Thanks that he is pleas'd to permit 'em to be in the Company of Saints; amongst whom, it ought to be of sufficient Satisfaction to 'em, without pretending to other Advantages, that they have room enough only to kneel. There are some, who make the day of rest a day of Labour, and perform the most necessary and just Duties, as burthensom and uneasie Tasks. There are others so deprav'd, that they hear Sermons, only to find fault with 'em, to wrest their Sense, or scoffingly, to repeat 'em to the Enemies of the Reformation. Many have lost the very Sence of such Exhortations that 'are plain, pure, easie, and full of Reason; Truth does not at all affect 'em, unless agreeably pronounc'd by a loud and eloquent Tongue, unless beautify'd with all the Gayety and Flowers of Rhetorick. They despise what is intelligible and clear, and judge that unworthy of 'em which the com-

mon People are able to understand. They are not to be satisfy'd, unless we undertake to criticize on some profound mysterious Point, subtilly to treat of some intricate Difficulty, the resolving of which belongs to God alone, having reserved the Knowledge of it to himself. They have forgot, that he who hath chosen the weak things of this World to confound the things that are mighty, 1 *Cor.* 1. 27. As he was meek and humble, so will he that our Knowledge be not immoderate or presumptuous; that he has put his Word in the Mouths of such weak ones who cannot yet declare it so imperfectly, but that those who have a Love for it, must own it, and distinguish it from the dazling appearance of Falshood. They have forgot that the subtilty of Language, and cunning Arts of Speech, are used only to harden those to whom he hath so frequently offer'd his Grace, which they have rejected, to maintain Error with Obstinacy, which passes with them for strength of Argument, and which indeed may be called the Constancy and Virtue of the Reprobate. The truly Faithful need no Eloquence to perswade 'em, that is introduc'd into the Church when Faith decays; and whenever Art is us'd to move the People, 'tis an apparent Argument of their obdurate Tempers. Yet, our Preachers find themselves obliged, that they may please their curious Hearers, to become more refin'd

refin'd and lofty, to quit the Simplicity of the Apoſtles, ſometimes for the ſubtilty of Philoſophers, or at others, for the ſublime Style of Orators. Theſe things are now no more cenſur'd than the manners of the Princes of the People; and many ill Cuſtoms are ſo far eſtabliſh'd in ſeveral Churches, that there are very few who either have the Courage, or Strength to remove 'em. The holy men of this Age have trouble enough to ſtrive againſt the Age it ſelf, and the Devil, in the Perſon of the Great and Powerful, does inſenſibly procure a Reſpect to himſelf.

I have met with a Reformation only in Doctrine; and I have not doubted, but that there were ſome Believers where the Word of Truth was preached: but, 'twas as hard for me to diſcover 'em, as 'tis for the Wicked to diſcern the Actions of the Juſt, or for the Good, the Infirmities of the Wicked. There are found but few, who are always careful to render their Works ſo conſonant to the Precepts of the Goſpel, as not ſometimes to be drawn off by Promiſes and Hopes of another kind. Beſides, God calls ſome of every Sex, of each Age, and of all Profeſſions; even thoſe who perſecute him, are ſometimes called; and, when he pleaſes, his greateſt Enemies are made his faithfulleſt Friends. Nay, by I know not what ſort of Decree, whoſe Cauſes are incomprehenſible, he, in

an Inſtant, changes thoſe whoſe Lives are debauch'd and vitious, and prefers 'em even before ſuch, whoſe Manners ſeem to have been perfectly regular, and who boaſt, that they have fulfilled the Law. 'Tis certain, that the moſt virtuous fall too often, whether it be from ſome extraordinary Terror, or ſome ſudden Aſſault of *Satan*, or from a Tryal by God himſelf, who does ſometimes expoſe 'em to their own Weakneſs, that they may not forget themſelves, and that they impute not to their own Virtue, what is really an Effect of Divine Grace. The Gift of God has always the ſtrongeſt Influence upon 'em; for, notwithſtanding thoſe Extravagancies they ſometimes allow themſelves in, or thoſe Errors that prevail upon 'em, it fares with 'em as with the prodigal Son, for ſooner or later, they neceſſarily return to their Father. However it is with 'em, they make not themſelves known by any affected Looks, or peculiar Faſhion in their Cloaths; they deſire to appear as other men, not particularizing themſelves by any odd fantaſtical Geſtures; their Actions are not at all hypocritical, their Devotion ſerves not as a Snare for their Covetouſneſs, or their Humility as a Mask to their Ambition. 'Tis by ſpiritual Signs they are made remarkable; if the Body does partake of theſe, they are Secrets in Phyſiognomy, the knowledge of which, is reſerved to the Author of Nature alone.

alone. When the Holy Spirit has once made an Impreſſion on 'em, there remain certain Marks upon 'em, which make 'em ſhine in the Eyes of the Almighty, as the Stars of the Night, which yet have no Light but what the Sun lends 'em. He alone, who has made the Hearts of men, and can change 'em, does know 'em, and make 'em known to whom he pleaſes; but, there are many appear Believers to us, who are not ſo, being capable only of a temporary Faith. Nevertheleſs, if we may paſs our Judgments on Men, I believe that their Converſation does ſufficiently diſcover their Affections: I believe alſo, that thoſe who truly love God, do infinitely rejoyce in the Contemplation of his Works, but more eſpecially, in the Meditation of his Word. They conſtantly read it, not out of bare Curioſity, or to find Fault with it, not from a vain deſire after Knowledge, or mercenarily to inſtruct others in it, but to inform themſelves of the Truth, to ſeek after Comfort, to ſtrengthen their Faith, and to confirm their Hopes. They have it always, either in their Mouths or Thoughts; and the greateſt Trouble they have, is, that they cannot effectually communicate it to thoſe who deſpiſe it, who look on it as a Snare to entrap 'em; who fear it as the ſinging of *Syrens*; for, their profligate Tempers render 'em incompatible with it's Purity. The Spirit of Diſcretion is an advantage:

vantage ſo rarely met with, that only the true Elect know how to chooſe, and the truly ſpiritual how to try all things, and keep to that which is good. 1 *Theſſal.* 5. 21. They are not concern'd to ſee ſo many falſe Prophets inſolently take upon 'em the Name of God, and vainly boaſt to be the Diſpenſers of his Word, which they uſe only to their own baſe Ends, and which they expound, as the Devil did, when he preſum'd to tempt the Son of God himſelf, and, as he daily does, thoſe who follow him.

Moreover, they intermeddle not in the Buſineſs or Intrigues of this World, but their contempt of 'em makes themſelves deſpiſable; upon this account, they appear mean and deſpicable, they are hated, perſecuted, as if their manner of Living, as well as their Belief, did accuſe that of others. They don't willingly ſide with any Party, unleſs the Service of God, or the Good of their Country engages 'em to it. And if they aim at any publick Employment, they will not under-hand make their Intereſt for it; much leſs, raiſe their Eſtates to the Prejudice of the Faith or Charity. The common Talk amongſt men of getting Riches, of making their Fortunes, of building fine Houſes, is not their ordinary Converſation: we may with Reaſon ſay, their Ambition is much higher than that of others, ſince no worldly Greatneſs can confine it.

it. They know very well the right Uſe of things, what Advantages men poſſeſs'd of Honours and great Offices, may with Decency, and neceſſarily claim; but thoſe are ignorant for whom they take pains, who are alwayes heaping up Riches, projecting mighty Deſigns, and erecting ſuch vaſt, prodigious Buildings, that their whole Life is not long enough to finiſh 'em. They believe no one ought to be called either Judicious or Reaſonable, but he who in earneſt labours after the attainment of his ſovereign Good and Happineſs; and 'tis with pity they look on thoſe who buſie themſelves ſo perpetually about the things of the Earth, as if they pretended not in the leaſt to any part in Heaven. 'Tis with trembling and ſorrow they obſerve the confidence of thoſe who ſtick at nothing whereby they may gratifie their Appetite and Senſes; to whom the ſteps of Goodneſs ſeem but as Degrees to Evil; and who become Great and Powerful, but that they may commit all ſorts of Crimes unpuniſh'd, and tyrannize over their Fellow Creatures. They abſent themſelves, as much as poſſible, from the Converſation of bad men; and becauſe they are leſs given to Flattery, they are look'd on as leſs agreeable. 'Tis painful to them to be complaiſant to thoſe that are diſpleaſing to them, nor can they approve of Error and

Vanity

Vanity; they cannot admire what God condemns, or ſhew any Signs of Joy in their Faces, for that which their Hearts are ſad.

Whatever Trouble or Diſſatisfaction they may meet with in this uneaſie Converſation, whatever Hatred, or Averſion they have for all theſe things, their Severity is yet leſs than their Charity. They don't, under colour of renouncing the World, ſpend all they have, nor do they advance their own Fortunes by the Ruine of any one. They know they ſhould be worſe than Infidels, did they not take Care of their Families, and that 'tis God's Command, That thoſe who work not, ought not to eat, 2 *Theſſ.* 3. 10. Therefore, as the day of Reſt is kept Holy by 'em, ſo thoſe of working are employ'd in honeſt Labour. But they are ſo far from believing that they have no other end in this World, but the doing their own Buſineſs in it, that they frequently cry out with their Maſter, *Here I am, O God, to do thy Will.* And, though they live, or rather languiſh, (as out of their Element) being alone amidſt the Multitude, and Strangers even amongſt their Brethren; although their Integrity and purity of Life, is look'd on as Folly, and their Strength as Weakneſs, yet they are not concern'd, that they ſuffer for doing well, and value not their Reputation, if they can but preſerve their Conſcience. They know very

very well, that if they pleas'd Men, they ſhould not be true Servants of God; that 'tis impoſſible to believe in him, and yet paſſionately to purſue the Glory of this World, which certainly becomes bitter to 'em, when they begin to have a juſt Sence of the Sweetneſs of Jeſus Chriſt. They are ſatisfy'd that this Life is but a Paſſage, a place of Tryal, or rather, a Field of Combat, where thoſe that fight not, muſt not expect either Honour or Reward.

'Tis extreamly difficult, on this occaſion, to reconcile the Knowledge of ſo many great Doctors, with their Obdurateneſs; I cann't imagine how they can think of the Goſpel, and yet reflect not on their own Conſciences. I am amaz'd, that ſuch Manifeſtations as they have, don't oblige 'em to own, and to ſay, "We are out of the "way certainly, and the Profeſſion we "make is abſolutely contrary to that of Je- "ſus Chriſt and his Diſciples. 'Tis ſaid, "That ſuch who will live righteouſly ſhall "ſuffer Perſecution; How then do we ſuf- "fer? The Princes and People are of our "ſide, we enjoy the Pleaſures and Delights "of the Earth, our Lot is always on a fair "Ground. And if this makes not the King- "dom of this World, what is it that can "do it? Shall we reckon the Vows of Pover- "ty, the Faſtings and the Rigors ſome of "our Party ſuffer? But, they are ſo far from

" from being blam'd, hated, or perſecuted
" for theſe things, that they are rather ho-
" nour'd and receive Rewards for 'em.
" Beſides, theſe voluntary Afflictions are of
" Humane Invention, and of the nature of
" thoſe, concerning which, the Scripture
" ſays, *Who hath requir'd this at your Hands?* I wonder, that the *Phariſees* of the Age have no Conſideration of theſe things; ſince Sufferings are ſo nearly link'd to the Profeſſion of Chriſtianity, that I know not whether we can ſay, that thoſe who have not been under ſome Perſecution have yet commenc'd Chriſtians. For, if in any Province or Country, the Bleſſing of Heaven, which perchance, favourably countenances the pious Zeal of ſome one Age, ſuffers Religion to flouriſh, and poſſeſs the Gate of it's Enemies, *Gen.* chap. 22. verſ. 17. and chap. 24. verſ. 60. in a little time, Error and Inſolence, the common Attendants of Proſperity, the Practiſes of *Satan* and his Emiſſaries, change and corrupt it, make it emulate the Religions of the World, and deſpiſe it's own original Simplicity: Shall the Servants be greater than their Maſter, ſhall they have the benefit of the Joys he has procur'd for 'em, and partake of his Glory, without bearing a part in his Torments and Patience? No, No, 'tis neceſſary that they find their Pleaſures amidſt

Grief

Grief and Sorrows, as the Roſe amongſt the Thorns; and that it fares with them as with *Joſeph*, who became greater by his Baniſhment; and as with *Job*, who grew young by his Calamities. They ought to eſteem it a ſingular Favour, as St. *Paul* did, that is given them not only to believe in Chriſt, but to ſuffer for his ſake. *Philip. chap.* 1. *verſ.* 29. and to think that they ſuffer very little, in compariſon of that Reward they hope for. Hope and Charity are the inſeparable Companions of Faith, all three together made a true Believer, and theſe three are infallible Marks of one. I don't mean that Faith which is obſcure, blind, weak, and wavering; that is an effect of Birth, Opinion, Cuſtom, and Tradition, that is always doubting, and is eaſily ſcandaliz'd, that does not mortifie the Affections, that makes us not forſake the World, or our Selves, and which faints under Perſecutions. I don't mean that Faith which follows Jeſus Chriſt for Intereſt and only Advantage, and of all his Miracles, conſiders that chiefly which multiplied the Bread. But, I ſpeak of that which is manifeſt, certain, and conſtant, that proceeds from the Power of the Holy Ghoſt, from the Words of Eternal Life, from Prayer and Humility, which is not acquired but revealed, that enters not into the Heart of thoſe who believe after a humane

humane way. I ſpeak of that Faith which removes from us the Cares of this Life; that raviſhes us with the Admiration of Divine Graces; that infinitely ſurpaſſes the Diſcourſe of Men; that obliges us to glorifie him who has beſtowed it on us, with Sighs and Groans that cannot be uttered.

A Trea-

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TREATISE

Concerning the

EUCHARIST.

IF Religion was only grounded upon the Opinion of men; if they might ſerve God according to their own Imaginations, and not his Commands; every Religion would be a good one, and our Intentions alone would be ſufficient to recommend each different Invention to us. The World, which for the moſt part is affected with things preſent, would be pleas'd with ſuch variety of Worſhip; one part of it would not be accus'd of Hereſie, or any other look'd on as guilty of Superſtition. But 'tis not enough to own a God, or pay any ſort of Homage to him, the great bus'neſs of Religion is, to ſave men from that Eternal Death which they have merited; but their Minds are ſo clouded with darkneſs, and ſo involv'd in Sin, that they cannot find either a Remedy againſt it, or the way to Salvation, or the

the Paths that lead to Supreme Happineſs. What likelihood is there, that the Children of Rebellion, who are under the Curſe and Anger of God, ſhould have yet ſtrength enough to recover their Fall, or ſufficient Light to direct 'em out of that profound and dark Abyſs into which they caſt themſelves. If they cannot comprehend Divine Truth, and that this Faith muſt be derived from ſome other Spirit than their own, why ſhould they pretend to the making of Laws, and ſo abſolutely to determine of Univerſal Religion. They ought to receive Inſtructions from an Underſtanding much more perfect than their own; for indeed they are ſo incapable to preſcribe or command on this occaſion, that they are utterly diſabled even to obey. I cannot imagine how men can be ſo preſumptuous, and yet ſo weak and impotent. They are ſure become inſenſible of their Infirmities, they are ignorant of their want of Knowledge, and flatter themſelves that their Light is ſo very clear, that their Blindneſs cannot be diſcover'd. The ſame Inſolence that at firſt deſtroy'd 'em, does continue to do ſo even to the end; they have violated the moſt holy things, and, if we may ſo ſay, have laid their hands on the Ark, againſt the ſtricteſt Prohibitions. Is there any thing more Sacred in Religion, than the Sacrament of the Euchariſt? And ought not that to be for ever preſerv'd inviolable, ſince

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inſtituted by him who was Wiſdom it ſelf? Yet what part of it is not alter'd, corrupted, or brought to nothing at all by the *Roman* Church? What remains then, in the celebration of what is now called the Maſs, of that which was heretofore called the Supper of the Lord? 'Tis a memorial our Saviour was pleas'd to leave of himſelf, to excite men, not only by Words, but by viſible Signs, to a remembrance of that which they never ought to forget. What Signs were ſo eligible? To what Elements could he have better compared himſelf, than to thoſe which are moſt neceſſary to the preſervation of our Lives? He who is that Bread which came from Heaven, for our Spiritual food, and that we might eternally live with him? What was more proper for him to do, than to take Bread, break it, and give it us, ſince his Body was to be broke for our Sins, and He to be deliver'd up to Death, that he might procure Life for us? What could He more ſignificantly ſay, than *Take and Eat*, ſince we cannot live unleſs joyn'd with him, as the Subſtance of the Bread which we eat every day is incorporated with our bodies, ſo that it becomes the ſame with us, and of two Subſtances but one. The ſame conſiderations that invite us to Eat, will to Drink alſo, unleſs one could do the Office of the other, as 'tis done in the Church of *Rome*. But the

Cup

Cup, being a ſign of the ſeparation of the Blood from the Body, is inſeparable from the Sacrament, even becauſe the Blood was ſeparated from the Body; for, in the double Action, the breaking of the Body, and the effuſion of the Blood, ought to be equally repreſented. It is not enough then at this Feaſt to *eat*, we muſt *drink* alſo, as 'tis cuſtomary at all others in the World; for he who invites us to it, does command us to do ſo, being pleaſed to ſuit himſelf to our Methods of living, and who would have us bear a part in his Sorrows, only that we may partake of his Joyes; He being the Beginning and the End of all things, the true Source of thoſe living Waters, whoſe Streams ſo refreſh the Trees of Paradiſe, that by thoſe they grow, flouriſh, and become eternally fruitful. I have not here undertaken to examine each particular part of the Maſs, or to compare it with this firſt Inſtitution, or to ſearch after any conformity to it, where in truth there is none: The Inſtitutions of men are here ſo intermix'd with thoſe of God, or indeed, have rather ſo quite alter'd 'em, that we can diſcover nothing but the pomp and ſtateline ſs of the myſtery of Iniquity: I will venture only to urge ſome things on the very words of our Saviour, which are the innocent Original of thoſe Controverſies, Seditions, Maſſacres, and Differences that happen amongſt Chriſtians, and which

which make the reaſon of our Communion become that of our Diſſention. 'Tis extremely difficult to add any thing to the thoughts of ſo many admirable Perſons, who have ſaid all that can be on this Subject, and who ſeem to have forgot nothing but Brevity; but I, having no other End, than the endeavouring to make my ſelf underſtood by the ſtupid and wilfully deaf, 'twould be to no purpoſe to ſerve my ſelf of others Reaſons, if ſo be I can make my own perſwaſive.

'Tis a manner of ſpeaking uſual amongſt all Nations, the ſtyle of all Languages, to give to a thouſand things the name of what they only put us in mind of, and to which they bear ſome reſemblance: This alſo extends even to Perſons: as we ſay, This is the King, when there is only his Seal or Picture; and, not abſurdly, we often name God, when there is only his ſhadow, or Image. This is a Figure ſo very common, that 'tis frequently made uſe of, even by thoſe that underſtand not one Figure in Rhetorick. This manner of Speech ſeems to be particularly made uſe of in Sacraments, not only as a great Propriety, but that 'tis inevitably neceſſary. Yet the Superſtitious, or rather thoſe whoſe Intereſt it is, have made it their buſineſs to take it literally; and 'tis inſufferable to hear 'em impertinently repeating, He hath ſaid it, He hath ſaid it. 'Tis true, that He hath ſaid, *This is my Body*; but the Apoſtle

ſtle adds to it, *which is broken for you*; and ſhews the neceſſary relation between the breaking of the one and the other: For, he took Bread, not to eat it himſelf alone, but to give it thoſe who were with him; He gave it not as a Sign of his Glorious Body, but as that of his Body which was to be broken for us. From hence 'tis apparent, that the Breaking and the Communion are ſo firmly joyned to this Action, that without them 'tis not indeed a Sacrament. Let thoſe, who ſo frequently urge, that He hath ſaid it, teach us, after what manner He gave his Body to his Diſciples, during his Weakneſs, before his Reſurrection and Glory; as alſo before his Paſſion and Death. Is it not in breaking Bread for 'em himſelf (who was in ſome ſort broken before he ſuffer'd) and that by his own hands, and not by thoſe of his Enemies, ſince the Sacrament preceded the Sacrifice? Is it not according to the cuſtom of all Sacraments, that he ſpake of it, in giving it a Name expreſſive of the Effect, and in ſaying, that 'tis not only what he repreſents, but that which he offers to thoſe who deſire to receive it? Who perceives not, that our Corporal eating does aſſiſt at the ſame time, and is a means to excite our ſouls to a ſpiritual one, which is abſolutely dependent on Faith? 'Tis certain, that many have been afraid, after the Bleſſing, to give the Bread the name of Bread, leſt it

ſhould

ſhould be taken for ordinary Bread. But, St. *Paul* calls it Bread four times at leaſt, for fear, that as by the *Capernaites*, or *Romans*, it ſhould be taken for Fleſh: he ſaid alſo, the Cup is the Communion of the Blood of Chriſt, for fear it ſhould be believ'd the Blood it ſelf. We cannot, doubtleſs, approach theſe Sacred Signs with too great Reverence, ſince by their means, the things they ſignifie are convey'd to us, or at leaſt, ſo offer'd, that 'tis but deſiring 'em, and we may receive 'em. Faith ſerves as a Mouth to us, and our Souls, in ſome ſort, eat and drink the Body and Blood of Jeſus Chriſt, as our Bodies eat and drink the Bread and Wine which repreſent 'em. Thus the Fathers, to ſtir up a Peoples Devotion, and engage 'em to the profound Reſpect of Holy Things, uſed certain ways of ſpeaking, which were not to have been believed, had they not been figurative. Their mighty Zeal, which perſwaded 'em they could never ſay too much, left 'em no room to imagine that their Metaphors, Metonymies and Hyperboles, would one day paſs for Articles of Faith. They could never have thought, that from the Flowers of their Rhetorick, would have grown ſuch a monſtrous Doctrine, or, that from the Weakneſs or Malice of men their ſerious and devout Meditations would have been turn'd into Chimerical Notions.

But, having endeavour'd to improve each others Expreſſions, they have unhappily contributed, without thinking of it, to a Myſtery they as yet knew not, and have by their Arguments, helped to ſtrengthen it's Abuſe. Their Evidence is every day cited to this purpoſe, the Tranſports of their Thoughts, and their extraordinary heights of Speech, are urged as undoubted Teſtimonies of the ſimple Truth. Though the ſame Writings of theſe Fathers are ſo expounded, that we may ſay of them as of the Holy Scriptures, That thoſe things which are clear and manifeſt remove the Scruples raiſed by ſuch which are difficult and obſcure; yet the great Doctors of the Age, whatever Reaſons have been ſhewn 'em to the contrary, forbear not to impoſe on the Credulity of the People; who, as the higheſt Peice of Devotion, daily worſhip a bit of Bread, and in this are ſo far prevail'd with by Cuſtom, that they are even ready to maſſacre thoſe who will not believe it. Add to the Errors of Speech, the long Converſation the Primitive Chriſtians held with the Heathens, of whom they have not only borrowed Temples, Altars, and Images, but alſo, Habits, Geſtures, Numbers and Myſteries; you'll find, that after their Example, they have omitted nothing that may render their Religion pompous, and ſuitable to the Grandeur of the World, that they could not

not ſtoop to the ſimplicity of the Goſpel, preferring rather the Appearance of things, than the real Truth.

Thoſe who have read but a very little, muſt confeſs, that they ſcarce ſee any thing in their Churches, which they have not borrowed from the ſuperſtitious *Gentiles*: And, not to ſpeak of any thing but what relates to our Subject of Diſcourſe, they worſhipp'd no Images but what muſt be conſecrated; being perſwaded, the Deities they repreſented were fixed to 'em, by the power of their magical Operations. Thoſe Chriſtians who have not been ſatisfy'd with the Terms of Bleſſing, and giving of Thanks, have been ſo pleas'd with that of Conſecration, that in time they believed a Virtue and Efficacy in it: hence proceeded the Obſervation of many myſterious Ceremonies, an Affectation of certain Words often repeated, beſides a Preſumption of adding others to thoſe of Jeſus Chriſt's, that they might not be wanting either in their Numbers or Virtue. Hence aroſe the Name of *Tranſubſtantiation*, ſo ill underſtood, and ſo ill made uſe of, that without the Explication they give of it, 'twould not be, in the leaſt, ſignificative of what they deſign it. This is a Doctrine, which as much as 'tis poſſible, deſtroys the Humanity of Jeſus Chriſt, and which frames to it ſelf a God in which, no reaſonable Creature can believe. This is the Source from whence flow ſuch

Streams of Contradictions, and unallowable Conſequences, that they both ſcandalize and diſcourage the greateſt part of Men, they obſtruct the Converſion of the Infidel, and confirm the Atheiſt in his Unbelief. 'Tis indeed a horrible Abuſe of thoſe Sacramental Words, *This is my Body*, to place a Power in 'em, in theſe latter times, of changing the Bread of the Euchariſt into the incorruptible Body of *Jeſus Chriſt*, to be receiv'd in by our corruptible ones, without any Need, or our finding any extraordinary Effect or Advantage by it. The Text is much more expreſs, that ſays, *The Word was made Fleſh*; yet no one believes, that by *Tranſubſtantiation*, the Divine Nature was changed into the Humane: So from the Sacramental way of ſpeaking, that ſays, *This is my Body*, no one ought to infer, that the Subſtance of the Bread is converted into the Subſtance of the Body of Jeſus Chriſt. What Virtue, what efficacious Uſe has not been allowed to Baptiſm, both by the Scripture and the Fathers? By it, we put on Jeſus Chriſt, and partake not only of his Death and Burial, but his Reſurrection alſo. By it, we are in an Inſtant made new Creatures; we paſs from Sin to Juſtification, and aſcend from Earth to Heaven. However Holy and Celeſtial the Euchariſt is, what more abundant Graces can it beſtow on us, than the Confirmati-

mation of these same Priviledges, the Operations of the same Spirit, the first Fruits of the same Transfiguration and Glory? Yet, for this only, the Learned of the Times have sought out many Inventions that exceed the Capacity of Men, and subvert all Orders, and the very Principles of the True Doctrine. From their hollow brain is produced an idle vain thing, that is void of all Substance, a real Apparition, which presents it self only to the Eyes, but deceives all the other Senses, that offers Violence to our Minds, and imposes on our Understanding and Reason. A Body that has neither Extent or Quantity; an indivisible Point that comprehends the whole; Blood that contains the Body in which it is contained; at the same time solid, and yet to be drank. What is really Corporeal, they annihilate, and make a Body of that which is truly spiritual. They utterly spoil the Sacrament by taking the Substance from it; they destroy the Body of Jesus Christ, by robbing him of all the Proprieties of a Body, only attributing to him those of a Spirit. 'Tis not then to receive the Sacrament, unless we have what it exhibits, *viz.* A substantial Sign: To be denyed, that is, to be deprived of what is signify'd; since in this Sacramental Communion, the one goes not without the other. But, either let 'em tell us

what is it's Subſtance, what it's Elements, what it's Figure, what it's Relation, or let 'em confeſs that 'tis not neceſſary to repreſent him in Figure, who is preſent in Perſon, or corporally to receive in the Hoſt, the Sign and the thing ſignify'd together. In effect, 'tis incoherent to be ſacramentally preſent, and yet really ſo: The Sign is not what it ſignifies, or the Picture what it repreſents; the Union of theſe things is made by Relation, not Subſtance.

The matter in Queſtion is concerning a Spiritual Nouriſhment, repreſented to us by a Corporeal one, without which, the other cannot be: For, what Relation is there between a Sacrament made up of Accidents, an appearance only of Bread, and the real Body of Jeſus Chriſt, broken, by which, we are nouriſh'd to Life eternal? What ſubſiſts not, cannot be the Repreſentation of a Subſtance; and to repreſent a Body by what has no Body, is to repreſent a Being by no Being, Every thing by Nothing, and if I may ſo ſay, the Truth by Falſhood. Hereupon, they make Expoſitions ſo very obſcure, and Diſtinctions ſo intricate and confus'd, that they cannot poſſibly make others underſtand that of which they themſelves are ignorant; and you cannot diſturb 'em more, than to put 'em on making plain even their own Explications. It has always been believ'd, That the Mind did better apprehend things,

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than they could be expreſs'd by any Words: but theſe men imagine they expreſs what our Thoughts cannot conceive: And when they have ſaid all they can, they have Recourſe to the Omnipotence of God, without taking the leaſt notice of his Will. If we are to believe 'em in this, God is not Omnipotent, unleſs he can deſtroy thoſe very Laws which he made to be eternally inviolable; unleſs he can contradict himſelf, and belye the Truth. He is not omnipotent, unleſs he can make a Humane Body to take up no place at all; or at leaſt, that the Whole be comprehended under a Point or Atome. He is not Omnipotent, unleſs he can make the Colour and Taſte of Bread to ſubſiſt without the Bread it ſelf; that is to ſay, That *Accidents* are not *Accidents*, which, they pretend, is every day done by him, in favour of theſe Gentlemen, by a Miracle, which no one can evidence, having never perceived any thing of it; or rather, by a Myſtery that ſurpaſſes all ſorts of Miracles, kept hid and undiſcovered only to be a Refuge for Preſumption and Ignorance. Who can patiently hear theſe Doctors, and not ſlight 'em? It is not enough that God is incomprehenſible, they do all they can to make him diſbelieved. They ſhelter themſelves under a Divinity, falſly ſo called, that conſiſts in critical Queſtions and difficult Anſwers, made inſignificant by their own Subtlety, that affect

the Ears with Sound and Noiſe, but not at all the Underſtanding. They own a Sacrament, which they emphatically pronounce; and which, to ſpeak properly, ſignifies nothing, unleſs taken in the ſence of the Reform'd Churches, who believe, that our Communion cannot be but Spiritual ſo long as it is Sacramental. By ſuch like extravagant and vain Expreſſions, they take off all the Difficulties can be urged to 'em, and entertain their Hearers with airy and idle Imaginations, by which, they take Pleaſure to deceive themſelves. They ſay, there muſt be a Sacrifice in the Church, againſt that place of Scripture, *There is no more Offering for Sin, after that which has been once made for all. Heb.* 10. *v.* 10. 18. They will have their pretended propitiatory Sacrifice, and that of the Croſs, to be but the ſame thing. Beſides, they will have the Bread of the Euchariſt changed into the Glorious Body of Jeſus Chriſt; and I know not how they allow to the ſame Subject, Paſſion and Glory: we muſt receive him whole, in remembrance that he was broke; and living in Memory of his Death; and tho' at their deſire, he comes every day to 'em, both in his Humane and Divine Nature, yet we muſt not forbear doing theſe things till he come. This is called Conſecration, that is, taking away the Subſtance of the Bread, and only reſerving it's Accidents, therewith to cover the Body of Jeſus Chriſt. This is called ſacrificing him, in

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Remembrance of himself, for the Redemption of the Living and the Dead. This is called eating him corporeally, altho' the Flesh profits not at all. And altho all these things are confuted by contradicting themselves, yet that never to be dry'd source of Miracles, *Transubstantiation*, reconciles 'em all, in defence of a Temporal right that usurps the Name of Spiritual. However it is, the *Sacrament* cannot be referr'd but to the time of the Sacrifice; and 'tis not to celebrate the memory of that, by supposing any other Body than that which was broken. 'Tis not that Blood which remain'd in the Veins of the Body we are to drink, but that which was shed, which, though worthy of having been receiv'd in the Vessels of Election, yet fell on the Earth, and consequently, cannot be drank, but spiritually. The Sign cannot contain more than the thing it signifies; and we take it really, tho' after the manner that the Spirit and Faith make things real. If it be true, that the Bread contains the Body whole and entire, what does the Wine add to it? What signifies the Superfluity of two Signs? 'Twas in vain the Lord commanded they should be taken separately, if one contains the other by a necessary consequence of this Transubstantiation. 'Twou'd be no great matter if it only produc'd superfluous things, if it did not such monstrously strange ones, that we dare scarce mention 'em, being so

very offenſive to thoſe who maintain 'em, that they have not the Courage to hear 'em. To what end had the Son of God, ſupping with his Apoſtles, eat his own Fleſh and drank his own Blood? Was his Body glorious before glorified, or elſe, Had he two Bodies at the ſame time, the one paſſible, and the other impaſſible? What neceſſity in theſe latter days, more than in former, oblig'd him to exhibit himſelf as Corporeal Food, to be expos'd, as we may urge to theſe Doctors, to be eaten by the moſt abject Creatures of the Earth? But, let us paſs by in ſilence theſe many Inconveniences which they themſelves infer from this ſo ill-grounded Doctrine; and to palliate 'em are oblig'd to have Recourſe to Rules, and Canons, which were they not Superſtitious, we would call Ridiculous. Let us only add, that if the Body of Jeſus Chriſt be incloſ'd in the Sacrament, we may eat it without believing in him: Thus Infidels obtain more than they require.

They eat of Celeſtial Food they have not asked for; nay, their very Contempt of it does not hinder 'em from it, ſince they cannot receive the Sacrament without eating it: but they are ſo far from eating it, that Believers themſelves do it not as 'tis underſtood by the Church of *Rome*. They receive not with the Sacrament, the Divine Eſſence, but the Virtue and Efficacy of the Fleſh

Fleſh and Blood of Jeſus Chriſt: and, ſince the Wicked cannot partake of his Graces, it follows, that thoſe Graces are not joyn'd to it by Conſecration. 'Tis not the Words pronounc'd, but believed, that make Jeſus Chriſt communicated in the Sacrament. 'Twould be ſtrange, if he muſt be unworthily eaten by his very Enemies, and that he who is Holineſs it ſelf ſhould every day enter into their defiled bodies, only to render 'em more guilty, and that he might have more Reaſon to condemn and puniſh 'em. On the contrary, 'tis the Devil that would enter into 'em, as he did *Judas*, when our Lord gave him the *Sop*. How is it poſſible, theſe two Gueſts ſo irreconcileable, can agree together? It is not credible, that being fill'd with the moſt ſovereign Good, we ſhould only have a ſenſe of Evil from it; we receive our Saviour, that we may be ſaved, the Wicked take only the conſecrated Signs; and becauſe ſuch, they commit Sacriledge, and render themſelves guilty of Treaſon againſt the Divine Majeſty, becauſe they have no regard to the Inſtitution of *Our Lord*, contemn his Offers in it, and deny it's Vertue.

They publickly take his Enemies part, they again ſpit in his Face, they crown him with Thorns, they ſtrike and crucifie him: 'Tis thus they eat of this Bread, and drink of this Cup unworthily; 'tis thus they eat

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their own Condemnation, not diſcerning the Body of Jeſus Chriſt. For, the Symboles, Seals, and Pledges of his Love, are accounted himſelf, by thoſe who believe in him, it being Faith alone, which makes the Signs inſeparable from the thing ſignified. 'Tis heavenly Food, given to no one for his Condemnation, but only for his Juſtification; for Life, and not for Death; not being under the Accidents of Bread, or in the Bread it ſelf, but in the Heart of thoſe who receive it. Thus the Bread ceaſes not to be Bread, but to be common Bread; it loſes not it's Subſtance, but acquires Sanctification, which changes not it's Nature, but adds Grace to Nature, for the ſake of thoſe that believe. The Myſtery of the Incarnation unites us to the Body of our Saviour; Faith, with which he inſpires us by his Word, unites us to his Spirit, which double Union is confirm'd to us by the Communion of Sacraments. But, as our Union with Jeſus Chriſt, cannot be perfect in this World, by reaſon of our Sins, and Death, which is a Conſequence of 'em; ſo, though we take the Symboles he gives us corporally, yet 'tis neither poſſible, or neceſſary for us to take what they ſignifie, but ſpiritually: For, if we take his Body, as the Church of *Rome* imagines it does, our Infirmities could not bear his Glory, the ſtronger would overcome the weaker, we ſhou'd doubtleſs periſh, or his Vertue would

would even then blot out all our ſins, we ſhould in an inſtant be transform'd, and become incorruptible and glorious, we ſhould be aſſured never to ſee Death. But we partake not of one of all theſe but by the comfort the Spirit gives us, but by Faith, by which we rely on his Promiſes, and but by that Hope we have of a Life to come. Thus to eat the Body of Jeſus Chriſt is to hear his Word, is to believe in him; to behold him on the Croſs, loaded with our Sins; to be truly ſenſible of his Wounds and Sorrows, and to confeſs, that by the Satisfaction of the Son, whoſe Merit is infinite, we ſatisfie the Father whom we have infinitely offended. 'Tis to be inflam'd with the love of him who has ſo very much loved us; and to aſſure him, (as we do all thoſe we love) that he is alwayes in our Thoughts, that he fully poſſeſſes our Hearts; that he is the Soul of our Souls; and, to uſe his own terms, that He *dwells in us, and we in him.* In fine, To eat the Body of Jeſus Chriſt, is to have a freſh and lively ſenſe of thoſe Favours he has beſtow'd on us, and to think that we are not only his Servants and Friends, but his Brethren, his own blood, bone of his bones, fleſh of his fleſh, and that we are part of that Church whom he has honour'd ſo far as to make his Eternal Spouſe.

Behold

Behold what is the Meat, and the Drink which are not given to all ſorts of Perſons, which ſatisfie, and quench the Thirſt of thoſe only, who hunger and thirſt after Righteouſneſs. But the Men of this World have not truly reliſh'd the Simplicity of this Inſtitution; they would heighten the Luſtre of this double Sacrament, and do all things according to the Example, or rather, in Emulation of the Superſtitions of the World. The Name of Religion, of a Church, and even of God himſelf, who ſerv'd 'em but as a pretence to make themſelves more honourable, to procure with more Eaſe, earthly Advantages and Preferments. Beſides this, I have often thought what lawful and neceſſary uſe they could make of this *Tranſubſtantiation*; 'tis what they themſelves could ſcarce tell, if ſo be they would conſider the common cauſe of Salvation, as well that of the *Jews* as of the *Gentiles*. Theſe prodigious Errors are the true Cauſes of all that Miſchief which happens in the World; and Mankind will be ſo long infeſted with Judgments, as Superſtition continues to corrupt Religion. But the Divine Oracles give us Reaſon to hope, that the days of Sorrow will be ſhorten'd, and that God will confound the Wicked by the Breath of his Mouth. The Time will come, that Children ſhall abhor, and deteſt the Belief of their Fathers,

thers, and will ſay, " Is it poſſible that our " Predeceſſors have been ſo ſilly and ſtu- " pid, or ſo extreamly harden'd by Cu- " ſtom, of ſo very careleſs in ſearch of the " Truth, to have believ'd things altoge- " ther incredible! What Spirit of Pride, what high Preſumption, has poſſeſs'd theſe Councils, who have imagin'd, they could appoint better Orders for Divine Service, than the Providence of God himſelf had done, by the Mouth of his own *Son?* I will then conclude with the Wiſe Man, or at leaſt, with his Tranſlator, who makes him ſpeak after this manner; *Eccleſiaſtes* chap. 3. verſ. 18. *I ſaid in my Heart, concerning the Eſtate of the Sons of Men, that God might manifeſt them, and that they might ſee, that they themſelves are Beaſts.*

A Diſ-

A
DISCOURSE

In which the Author gives his Reaſons why he Prefers the Reformed Religion before the *Roman*.

YOU have been ſo kind, Generous *Ariſtander*, not only to ſuffer, but command me to give you a ſhort Account of the Reaſons that invite me to ſeparate from the Church of *Rome*, to cloſe with that of the Reform'd. 'Tis with all my heart I deſire to obey you, yet not without an Apprehenſion that my Obedience may not ſuit with that Reſpect I owe you. I fear my Belief may in ſome ſort appear injurious to yours, and that when I confeſs, with the greateſt ſincerity imaginable, my neareſt Thoughts to you, they may be ſo diſpleaſing, as not to be ſuffer'd by you. You ſhall have no reaſon to accuſe me of wreſting the Senſe of the Scripture, or interpreting it according to my own Fancy; for I will not quote many Paſſages out of it. You ſhall have no reaſon to miſtruſt my Arguments, as being nice or ſubtil, not deſigning to meddle with any Controverſie, for I'll leave that to the Schools and Books, believing nothing can be ſaid more con-

concerning it. I will ſerve my ſelf of no Rhetorical Colours or Artificial Eloquence, intending to make my Diſcourſe as plain and ingenious as my Thoughts are; I will entertain you only with thoſe things your Eyes ſee, and your Ears hear every day, but Cuſtom hinders you from having a due conſideration of 'em.

Firſt, I muſt needs ſay, that nothing is ſo amazing to me, as to obſerve the Name of God every day in the mouthes of thoſe who know him not, nor indeed will they at all make it their buſineſs to do it. They diſcourſe of him according to their own Imaginations, and inveſt him with Qualities barely Humane, and ſo become guilty of the ſame fault with Pagans and Idolaters, who made to themſelves Gods according to the vain Suggeſtions of their own Thoughts. Some take their Religion by chance, and ſtand up in defence only of what was firſt imprinted on 'em: Others, ſuſceptible of all ſorts of Opinions, follow that only which is the moſt convenient for 'em. Whoſoever, to this purpoſe, will act only as his Natural Reaſon dictates to him, or believe but what Men like himſelf perſwade him to, will be capable of purſuing all Religions, one after the other, and by conſequence will really have none at all. If men were to receive no inſtructions but only from Men, they would find it extremely difficult to make a true choice

choice of what might yield ſolid Quiet, and Eaſe to their Minds. Each Sect has its Doctors and Logicians, who all believe their own reaſonings grounded on Reaſon it ſelf. They neither want Natural or Artificial Logick, which they pervert, and ſo raiſe from it numbers of odd *Chimæra's*, called by them un-erring, invincible Arguments, which ſwell 'em with Pride and Vanity, and make 'em love rather to appear reaſonable, than really to be ſo.

Truth, in their mouths, ſeems to put on all manner of ſhapes, or to ſpeak more properly, Bare Probability paſſes with them for Truth; and in this multitude of Opinions, he who does not cloſely adhere to ſome Principles, knows not which to embrace. Every one is not able to diſcern falſe Teachers by their Doctrine. For it being now both ſubtile and obſcure too, we may call it a Learned Ignorance, that raiſes more Difficulties than it can reſolve, and does rather multiply Doubts than clear 'em. But however, ſince the great Point in Queſtion is the Service of God, to live well, and to attain to Salvation; it is neceſſary that thoſe who furniſh us with Precepts, give us Examples too. 'Tis neceſſary that ſuch who are our Guides, lead the way. 'Tis thus they may procure the name of true Paſtors; and 'tis the moſt certain means, by which we are taught by Jeſus Chriſt him-

himſelf to diſtinguiſh and know 'em. 'Tis true, that if Men were to be judged only by their Works, there would be found but very few who were not extremely guilty. But without doubt Religion is much corrupted, ſince thoſe of the Church are become worſe than Lay-men, ſince their vitious and debauch'd lives render 'em intolerable to honeſt men, make 'em abus'd by their own People, and deſerve to be hated by all the World.

I have not much wonder'd at the different Opinions of Pagans, and their Philoſophy; but I muſt confeſs, the Diviſion amongſt *Jews*, *Chriſtians*, and *Turks*, has ſeem'd very ſtrange to me, who ought all to be united, who had nothing more to wiſh for, when once they had learn'd there was a Divine Word. Above all, I could not obſerve, without horror and pity, ſo many different Parties amongſt Chriſtians themſelves; and amongſt thoſe, I am oblig'd to ſay, I found that the *Worſt*, which would peremptorily force us to believe, is the *Beſt*. 'Tis that Party which ſeems to have made a collection of all the Errors in the World, and from hence only has merited the name of *Univerſal*. 'Tis that which is rich only by borrowing, not being able to bear with the pure ſimplicity, not to ſay the Poverty of the Goſpel. 'Tis that which has not been contented to have the name of a Church com-

common to others, but would, for it ſelf alone, ſet up a Title of Sovereignty, pretending no Spiritual things can be diſpos'd of but by its Order; and thus by a Preſumption as ridiculous as inſolent, calls it ſelf the Abſolute Judge of the whole World. But 'tis that alſo which is eaſily known, however we obſerve it, either by its Leaders or Followers, its Statelineſs or Poverty. We need no great Learning or Subtilty on this Account, ſo many Controverſies are uſeleſs, ſince it ſufficiently makes it ſelf apparent; it at firſt ſight ſhews it ſelf to any one who will take the leaſt notice of it, its Works do plainly enough manifeſt its Doctrine. But if we will yet make a farther diſcovery of it, we need but read the Scriptures, and compare the matter of 'em with the Practices of this Spiritual Head and its Party. It may be you'l ask me, what I find ſo ſtrange in it? I anſwer, that I meet with what does really aſtoniſh me, and what in my Opinion, ſhould others too, as well as my ſelf. I obſerve in it, I know not what, that does both grieve and fright me, that fills me with compaſſion, and ſtrikes a terrour upon me, which I ordinarily expreſs by Sighs and Groans. I obſerve I know not what Political Order, that ſubſiſts by Traffick, and the Sale of Spiritual things, that uſes the Name of God, to make the Laws of Men more regarded, and to oblige the Peo-

People willingly to pay ſuch Impoſitions as are laid on 'em. Doubtleſs, there is no Monarch has fairer Pretences to make himſelf obey'd, and his Monarchy Univerſal. But this Scarlet, this Purple, theſe Crowns, do rather belong to Emperours, and Terreſtrial Princes, than to the Miniſters of Jeſus Chriſt, who has aſſured us, that his Kingdom is not of this World, *John* 18. 36. Which is a certain Argument, that under the name of Spiritual, this Temporal Power is but a Tyrannical Uſurpation, much more grounded on the Predictions of the Revelations, than the Precepts of the Goſpel. 'Tis an Empire, whoſe Princes are as ſo many Slaves to Ambition and Covetouſneſs, whoſe Votes are to be bought, and who, in the Election of a Head, that has no Power but what he attributes to himſelf, do bear a part even with Kings; who are ſcared without reaſon by his imaginary Thunder. What likelihood is there that the Truth of God, or rather God himſelf, can be found amongſt ſo much corruption and Bribery, which fills the Conclave? That Holineſs cannot be fix'd in its Throne but by the mercenary ſuffrages of theſe Men; That *St. Peter* cannot preſerve his Chair ſafe, but by ſecret and unjuſt Contrivances? What likelihood that men led by Intereſt, which doubtleſs is the greateſt God they own, and men whoſe manners

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are ſo impure and depraved, can any long time agree with the purity of the Goſpel? And by what Vices could they more juſtly fall into a Reprobate ſenſe? 'Tis really a very ſtrange thing to me, that the Doctors of the *Roman* Church imagine themſelves, upon an ill-grounded Preſumption, to be the moſt reaſonable of all men; and perceive not that they may err as well as thoſe who cry'd out, *The Temple, the Temple, Jer.* 7.4. as they do now *the Church, the Church.* If it be ſo that it cannot err, why could not *St. Peter*, from whom it receives this great Privilege, beſtow it on that of *Antioch?* What could his Death contribute more to it than his Life? What ſignifie Places which have not had any particular Promiſes, or Seats which are not more ancient than others? In what have the Errors of *Aſia* out-done thoſe of *Europe?* What Holy Oracles have ever fore-told that *Rome* ſhould be the *Jeruſalem* of the Univerſe? What an unhappineſs has it been to other Churches, that they have not been able to continue even one Age without their Impurities, when the Church of *Rome* alone has been for fifteen free from Error? If ſhe muſt perſevere in the Faith, even to the end, what did *St. Paul* think when he plac'd her amongſt the wild Branches grafted on the Olive tree, and conſequently more liable to be cut off than its own natural ones; and why would

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he pronounce a threatning upon her, which was never likely to come to paſs? Thoſe certainly who have deſign'd to build her up, have ruin'd her, and thoſe who have enrich'd, have deſtroy'd her. 'Tis extremely hard to make a juſt agreement between the love of the things of the Earth, and thoſe of Heaven? Or can Faith, Piety, or Virtue, ſubſiſt long amidſt Luxury and Abundance? Corruption generally begins with our Manners, which, when once ſo perverted as to arrive to their height, they have no manner of Reſpect for thoſe things that are Sacred; nothing then ſo Holy or Religious, which they turn not into Profaneneſs. 'Tis then men cannot away with the pure Doctrine; 'tis then they make Doctors after their own faſhion; that thoſe are inveſted with Authority who leaſt deſerve it, and who inſolently violate the Divine Commands. 'Tis then their Preachers become fearful and cowardly, holding many things as indifferent, which are indeed very pernicious; and thus at length they allow, what at firſt 'twas uneaſie to 'em even to connive at.

The *Romiſh* Religion has been too long conſiſtent with the Power of the World; the Princes and Nobility, the Magiſtrates and People ſide with it, and have, for many Ages ſupported its Authority. This is a ſign of its not being the true Church, ſince that frequently needs Tryals of Affliction, and

and whoſe greateſt Enemy is the World it ſelf. I muſt confeſs, that ſometimes the Preaching of the Goſpel does convert whole Towns and Provinces, nay, even Kingdoms; but they continue not long without diſturbance; the Jealouſie of their Neighbours, the Treachery of their own People and Servants, ſet on foot by the Church of *Rome*, and, what is worſt of all, their abuſe of Gods bleſſings, and their proſperous Condition, which is generally attended by a corruption of Manners, do in a little time create to 'em Croſſes and Diſquiets. Their Tranquillity and Peace would be extraordinary and wonderful, if it laſted one Age; but this Terreſtrial reſting-place is not appointed for their Happineſs. How long has the Reign of Jeſus Chriſt been that of this World? how long have the Nobles, the Learned, and the People, ſubmitted to the Juriſdiction of the Church? How long has it been that true Chriſtians have not been perſecuted? How long ſince Servants are become greater than their Maſters? And by what new Goſpel have they made even *Cæſars*, and the Princes of the Earth Tributary? No, no, there is no Society of men (let 'em be what they will) can have the name of a Church by any Temporal Eſtate, but by the alone Profeſſion of Embracing and of teaching the incorrupted Doctrine and the Truth. Thus the Doctors of the Age, with an inſufferable Con-

Confidence, brag that they have not in the leaſt alter'd, either the Commandments of the Law, or the Articles of Faith, but that they have cloſely adhered to the very foundation of 'em. But is it not to break the Law which God pronounc'd with his own Mouth, and writ with his own Hand, ſometimes to accuſe it, of being inſufficient, and then of ſuperfluity, and to retrench ſuch words from it, as they like not, when they deliver it to the people? Is it not to violate the Faith, to apply themſelves to any other Mediators than Jeſus Chriſt, and to ſubvert that Order he has appointed both for a Form of Prayers, and that of Sacraments? Thoſe who have but an indifferent knowledge of the Pagan Religion, muſt own that three parts of what they ſee practis'd in the Celebration of the Maſs; as to their Habits, their Geſtures or Ceremonies; were the invention of, and eſtabliſhed by *Numa Pompilius*, King of the *Romans*. Yet no one has ſo much as thought of making him paſs for a Prophet, or a Meſſenger ſent by God ſeven hundred years before the coming of Jeſus Chriſt, to declare what ſort of Worſhip and Religion that of the Chriſtians ſhould be. But hereupon to ſatisfie you, they give you fine words, telling you, that theſe Ceremonies of the Heathens by introducing of 'em into the Church are ſanctify'd. By the ſame reaſon thoſe things that were borrow'd by the *Jews* of

Idolatrous Nations, and which they brought into the Temple, ſhould have been ſanctify'd even by the Temple. But neither Prieſts, or Prophets ever imagined they could appeaſe the jealouſie and anger of the Eternal, by a ſpecious excuſe ſo well devis'd. 'Tis unſeaſonable to uſe the flowers of Rhetorick, and to entertain thoſe with glittering colours, and appearances who only ſearch after, and ſtand in need of the Truth. 'Tis in vain to endeavour to pleaſe the eyes of thoſe whoſe Hearts are grieved for their ſins, who tremble at the voice of the Law-giver, and who believe the Divine Inſtitutions ſo very Sacred, that thoſe are looked on by 'em as guilty of Sacriledge, who dare be ſo bold as to intermix Humane Inventions with 'em. I own that I cannot go into their Churches with a ſatisfy'd Conſcience, without a great diſquiet to my mind. For I ſee nothing on every ſide but the Pomp of *Paganiſme* ſhining forth, but ſuch things as are diſpleaſing to the Eternal, and which provoke his Jealouſie. I only ſee Altars and Chappels, each of which has its Patron, and are admirably beautify'd, in emulation one of the other, by the preſents of Ladies, and ſuperſtitious Trophies. *How!* you'l ſay, is not Jeſus Chriſt Preached here? Yes doubtleſs, his name muſt be made uſe of to gain a Reputation to what is ſaid, and fairly to put off the reſt of their Inventions. But conſider a little, and you'l find

find that Leaven mix'd with it, of which we ought to beware; that dreadful poyſon, and that Character of Paganiſme. You'l perceive a Style that has little of that of the Scripture in it, but very much of the Schools and prophane Authors, and their chief Divinity generally ſet out with Allegories, and ſome Meditations of the Fathers. You'l meet with a certain Miſcellany of Common-places, ſome ingenious pieces of Wit that pleaſe the Ears, and whoſe end for the moſt is not ſo much for the Preaching of the Goſpel, and edifying of the People, but for the praiſe of the Preacher. It is palpable, that the Spirit of God does not inſpire 'em with theſe things, however good they may be in appearance, ſince they ſeem to be ſaid or done only to procure applauſe to the Ingenuity of men. I know there are ſome amongſt 'em who deſire to be accounted more ſincere than the reſt, by publickly profeſſing that they only Preach Jeſus Chriſt Crucify'd: But preſently they belye themſelves, and give demonſtrations of their being not leſs Superſtitious than thoſe they teach, by committing with 'em open Acts of Idolatry. I could never like theſe Famous Preachers or Writers, who ſometimes find fault with the Jeſuits, and then with thoſe of other Orders, who ſeem to endeavour to make a Reformation in ſome Points of Doctrine. Theſe are thoſe refin'd Hypocrites, who ſtrike at ſome

head of this Hydra, but never go to the Belly. If there were no Cardinals Caps, or rich Bishopricks to be hoped for, they would not much care to be, or indeed seem better than others. For after all this do they not pray to Saints? Don't they observe their Feasts? don't they fall down before Images? don't they go every day to Mass? This is the fulness and complication of all errors, the source of all evil. This is that wonderful Sacrament, which since its first institution has extreamly chang'd its nature, and which was not ordain'd to be expos'd as a sight only. This is that invisible Miracle, that incredible sign, without Elements, in which there is nothing that can be broken, nothing that can nourish, nor any thing which has the least conformity with, or relation to the things it signifies. This is, if we'l believe those of the Church of *Rome*, that true Supper, at which Christ made a propitiatory Sacrifice before he was Sacrific'd; at which his Body became Spiritual before he was glorify'd. What aery fancy! what strange Doctrine, that would perswade us that the Body of Jesus Christ, which, except sin, is altogether like ours, is whole on the Table, and whole under the accidents of the smallest piece of bread that can be imagin'd; that 'tis cover'd under a Point or Atome? Is not this to belye, and utterly destroy the Humanity of the Son of God? Is not this

this to place Death in the room of Life, and to make our Adoration of no effect at all, instead of bringing us to a serious Contemplation of the Being of Beings, and of him who is really Man, as he is truly God.

This imaginary *Transubstantiation* is so full of Contradictions, that it renders the Learned more ridiculous than the most ignorant of men. It has Consequencies not to be pronounc'd without Horror, and which those who defend, cannot hear of, without Transports of Fury. What willfull Ignorance, what blind Passion, what Curse, what Obstinacy, does hinder the Exercise of their Minds? Open your Eyes ye stupid ones, use that Understanding which is left you, and consider that the same Communion, and the same Faith serves the *Jews* and the *Gentiles*; and that whatever Priviledge one has had above the other, they are chiefly distinguish'd by Time: The one believ'd in him who was to come, and the other, in him who was come: The former had no need of *Transubstantiation*, and the latter judge it not necessary. The Priests, who are believ'd to make every day this miraculous Change, and by that, receive within 'em the Holy of Holies, should be extraordinary sanctify'd Men; and yet their Lives are so corrupt and vitious, that their Names, for a long Time, are become infamous even to a Proverb. I could never approve of their Masses, their Mattins,

their Veſpers, or indeed, of their Prayers, which are made in a Tongue the People underſtand not; a true Sign of their Slavery, and the *Roman* Tyranny.

I liked not thoſe Traditions which are loaded with ſo much Heatheniſh Superſtition, that Purgatory, thoſe pretended Satisfactions, their Singing, their Feaſts, their Fraternities, their Proceſſions or Pilgrimages, their preſuming on their good Works and Merits. After their manner of proving theſe things by the Scripture, there is nothing in the World but may be proved by it alſo. They forcibly deduce 'em from ſome Paſſages, in which, neither the Prophets or Apoſtles would have been under figurative or obſcure Expreſſions, had they been neceſſary to the Chriſtian Worſhip. They have boldly ſet up Saints in the place of Gods, and their Canonizations of Men inſtead of that of God's, without conſidering it's Conſequence. In the mean while, the World groans under Multitudes of different Orders, which they every day inſtitute, ſometimes under one Name, and ſometimes another. They care not though they ruine Houſes, and whole Families, if they can but advance their own Intereſt, and leave enough to eſtabliſh themſelves under Retreats of Idleneſs. Children, by their Perſwaſion, diſobey even their Fathers, and under Colour of devoting themſelves to God, and to frequent Prayer, they give themſelves up to the

the imaginary Devotion of certain hollow Brains, and to the unprofitable Actions of a vain and ridiculous Obedience. And 'tis certainly apparent, that the more these things encrease, the more does the Anger and Judgments of Heaven afflict the Earth. I cann't imagine, how the Austerity of some, agrees with the Licentiousness of others; for, 'tis often observ'd in the World, that there are several bear the Name of *Monks*, who are far from being such. They cunningly wheedle themselves into Houses where they can get any Advantage, and holding the Women captive, enslave the Men by their Means. Some are profess'd Litigious men, and yield not in this to their very Abbots; others are sollicitous, and make whom they please to gain or loose the Cause.

Besides, I could never endure those *Pagan* Imitations, their Shaved Heads, which look as if bald. They seemed to me, to have taken something away from the Shape and Beauty of Men, which God had given 'em; they were so far, in my Opinion, from bearing the Character of Holiness, that nothing looked more deform'd and ugly. I have always been rather displeas'd with, and indeed detested, than admir'd their Hoods, their Cowls, their nasty Habits, and naked Feet. God having created Man after his own Image, endued him with the most perfect form of all Creatures; yet they have made

it more frightful than that of the most monstrous or wildest Beasts.

Since Jesus Christ is come, Figures and Signs are needless, unless such which he has appointed. 'Tis not bare Feet, or bald Heads, but Mouths to publish the Gospel, that we want. I abhorr'd likewise to see several go about cheating the World, pretending to be possess'd by some Spirit that taught 'em to show cunning Tricks, as not long since, those of *Loadun* and *Louvriers*, of which People have been undeceiv'd, I would say to their Shame, if they had not wholly lost it.

I have not easily given Credit to their Miracles, whose Doctrine I could not believe. 'Tis the last Refuge *Satan* has, when he has lost his Cause, to endeavour to dazle us with false Lights, and fright us with Apparitions. The Adventures of Kings, Princes, and People, are represented by our Comediens; but the Religious, pretending to be possess'd, play the part of Devils, and act the Comedies of Hell. I have thought, that if their Doctors are extravagantly learn'd the People are brutishly ignorant; and that it pleases God, that his Children should be moderately wise, that is, supply'd with such a Wisdom that suits not only with the Capacity of Philosophers, but with that of Shepheards and Fishermen; not such who are really Brutes and Sots, who knew no farther than

than the Animal Life, who take Pains only to eat and drink, and ſo dye as they have lived.

I have obſerv'd that thoſe devout Souls which are ſo mightily eſteem'd, are zealous without Knowledge, ſuperſtitiouſly Religious, have not a true filial, but ſervile Fear of God, which inſtead of eaſing, does without Intermiſſion torment 'em; and at length, having made both Body and Mind uneaſie, does equally deſtroy 'em. They pray much leſs to the Creator than to the Creatures; they contemplate Jeſus Chriſt, the Virgin, and Saints in pieces of Wood and Stone, which are ſo far from being like 'em, that they do 'em great Wrong; and whatever they may tell us, when they proſtrate themſelves before Images, ſince the Body cannot at all act without the Motion of the Soul; their Minds, without doubt, are fixed upon 'em, as well as their Eyes. 'Tis true, many of 'em are taught to ſay, that they do not adore in 'em what we apparently ſee 'em do: They diſtinguiſh Adoration, and pleaſe themſelves to give different Names to things which they alike practiſe. They are become ſo ſubtle, that they belye not only our Senſes and Reaſon, but their own too, being almoſt perſwaded, that they do not that which is done by 'em even with ſo much Heat and Fervency, and in the ſight of the whole World. The People who underſtand

not theſe Sophiſtical Diſtinctions, do proſtitute and allow themſelves in the commiſſion of Pure Idolatry: There are ſome pleas'd to keep 'em in this Error, no one takes the leaſt Pains to undeceive 'em.

In fine, I have found that the greateſt part of 'em relye on their Birth; the firſt Inſtructions they have receiv'd, from ſome particular City or Place, on Cuſtom or Intereſt. That they ſatisfie themſelves with the outſide of things, with Colours, Sounds, and other Vanities, which make 'em contemn the Simplicity of the Goſpel; for, Men not being able naturally to comprehend what is of the Spirit of God, will embrace no Religion, unleſs pompous, or will admit of the Government of Jeſus Chriſt, if not Temporal. Nothing engages them to Reverence and Devotion, but what makes a glorious Show. Nothing prevails with them ſo much as Muſick, Painting, Images, Gold, Azure, Purple, Scarlet, and external Ornaments. In theſe, the Ladies every day employ themſelves; and not being able longer to charm the men of the World, by neceſſity become religious. Their great Care is to beautifie Churches and Altars, and richly to adorn the very Marbles; whilſt the Poor are naked, and groan under their Miſeries, not having wherewithal to defend 'em from the extream Rigour of the Seaſons. Shall I venture to ſay, that I obſerve nothing

nothing in the Church of *Rome*, that bears the leaſt mark of true Chriſtianity; no, not their very Funerals, which ſhould at leaſt terminate all their Vanities? The Rich then, if we may believe them, may purchaſe their very Salvation; but the Poor, even after their Death, beg for the Payment of their Burial.

'Twas now but neceſſary that God ſhould raiſe a ſort of men to reform thoſe who were arriv'd to the higheſt pitch of wickedneſs, or that to this purpoſe he ſhould ſend even Angels themſelves. Yet they have blaſted their Reputations, they have render'd their very names odious, whoſe deſign was only to keep 'em from the Pit of Perdition, and direct 'em in the ways of Salvation, who of their own heads have made no Inventions, who have aimed at no Benefice, or Intereſt, but that of Reformation, and the Service of God. Theſe are the Meſſengers whoſe Miſſions needs no new Miracles, for they Preach no new Doctrine. They adhere to Principles, to Univerſals, to the foundations of the Truth, which grows not old, or decays, and yet is valued for its Antiquity. Their Sermons are ſuch, that there is no one who is reaſonable, but muſt own their coherence with the Scriptures, which they perſwade their People to read with care and diligence, ſaying, "Obſerve, if we deceive you, truſt "not to us, or believe not our Doctrine, if

"you

you find it not confirm'd to you by that of the Prophets and Apoſtles. Whilſt thoſe on the contrary, of the *Roman* perſwaſion, cry, after the manner of the Heathens, *from hence, from hence, ye prophane*, and do always rather terrifie than afford comfort, their profeſſion being in every thing dark, and myſterious, nay, it ſets it ſelf out with the name of Myſtery. But I cannot imagine that Religion a bad one, which deals with us with that frankneſs, which takes off the Veil of Superſtition, which diſperſes the darkneſs of Ignorance, and gives ſuch light, underſtanding and conſolation to its Profeſſors, as that of the Reform'd does. Yet theſe are the unpardonable crimes that excite the calumnie of ſo many enemies, who are both their Accuſers, and Judges, unjuſt and inconſiderate Judges, who continually pronounce againſt 'em this ſhort ſentence, inſpir'd into 'em by truly infernal Furies; *you are damn'd, you are damn'd.* Inhumane and Diabolical ſaying! which againſt the Prohibition of our Saviour himſelf, raſhly judges anothers Servants; and thoſe who are not under their juriſdiction. Theſe are the ſtrongeſt arguments, the ſofteſt remonſtrances, and the moſt charitable words they put into the mouths of their people, who bark and rail at their Brethren, inſtead of gently diſcovering their Errour to 'em, or hearing their Juſtification. How great is the

the injuſtice of Men! And how do moſt of 'em deſerve that Condemnation they pronounce againſt their Neighbours. Such as theſe upbraid me with my Religion, who are unacquainted with their own, and know nothing of mine but from its Enemies. They condemn me upon the bare report of my Adverſaries; without hearing either my Advocate or my ſelf. But pray tell me, Gentlemen and Ladies, who are they for whom you have ſo great an Averſion? to whom do you talk with that Sharpneſs and Anger? Are they not thoſe who ground all their Religion on the Holy Scripture, who read, meditate on, love, and admire it, who learn it by heart, and who are ſo far from accuſing it of inſufficiency, that in that alone they find the Words of Eternal Life, ſufficient for their perfect Inſtruction and Comfort? Are they not thoſe whoſe Charity recalls you to that firſt Eſtate in which you were? When no Images were yet ſet up in your Churches, when you own'd no other Purgatory than the Blood of Jeſus Chriſt, when going to Maſs, or taking the Cup from the People, was not ſo much as talked of, but meeting together for the breaking of Bread, which was not elevated to make it ador'd? They certainly have not the Spirit of God, who hate ſuch as love his Word, and only covet to impart to you that Light, and thoſe Joyes they receive from it.

It

It muſt be acknowledg'd, theſe are ſtrange Hereticks, and are mightily in the wrong, to ſtick to Principles, not to preſume beyond what is written, 1 *Cor.* 4. 6. and not to turn to the right hand, or to the left, *Joſh.* 23. 6. They are to blame, not to conſent to the adding of other Commands to the Law, or other Articles to the Faith which is preſcrib'd 'em. In a word, they do very ill, that they mix not profane things with Holy. Indeed, I conſent with all my Soul to their Profeſſion; let what name they pleaſe be given 'em, I had much rather be one of thoſe Hereticks, than one of the Catholicks of the Age. For, in effect, who are they whoſe Doctrine we ought ſo very much fear? Is it that of Kings and Princes, who are chiefly intruſted with the care of Secular things? Is it that of Magiſtrates, who decide Differences between men? Is it that of the People, who are employ'd in Mechanical Arts, or in Trading? Nothing leſs: 'Tis that of the Great Doctors of the Church, and whoſe Leaven ought to be ſuſpected by us, as that of the Phariſees. They are thoſe who do what they pleaſe, by the Priviledge and Authority of that Character they bear; who, under the name of Doctors, or Fathers, preach Errour effectually, and who, the more they are fill'd with Frenzy and Enthuſiaſm, the more would they perſwade us they are inlighten'd. They are thoſe who

who have ſuch an extraordinary Opinion of their own Strength, that they brag that they are not only able to fulfill, but to ſurpaſs the Law. And though that obliges us to *love God with all our Hearts, and our Neighbours as our ſelves*, it is not ſufficient to bear teſtimony of their Faith, or to magnifie their Works. To this muſt be added Councils which it comprehends not, and which tranſport men beyond that perfect Love which it obliges us to. Several Traditions muſt be obſerv'd, which, tho' inſtituted by Pagans and Infidels, are become Sacred, ſince admitted into the Church, and called Apoſtolical. To conclude, Many amongſt 'em do ſo abound in doing Good Works, that they have ſome to ſpare to impart to thoſe who do none at all; and in order too to their obtaining Eternal Life.

It is not to be wonder'd at, that the Evil Spirit has prevail'd on men to forbid the reading of the Holy Scripture; for 'tis impoſſible that thoſe impreſſions it makes on pious minds, which are ſeriouſly induſtrious in the ſearch of Salvation, can conſiſt with the Doctrine and Religion of the Times. It has often recover'd me from a Lethargy, into which I was inſenſibly plunged by the Errours of the World. By it I have learn'd to know both my Beginning and my End. It has infus'd into me both a Love and Fear of my Creator: it has made me fear his Judgments,

Judgments, adore his Goodneſs, and lay claim to his Mercy. It has caus'd me to obſerve ſuch various, and ſo many proofs of his Providence, that I had no room left to doubt of it. I never read it, but I became better'd by it, yet not with that Perſeverance as I could have wiſh'd. Therefore I thought 'twas neceſſary for me to begin it often, and never to leave it off. I met with ſo many Truths in it, from one end to the other, that I have not follow'd their Example who only ſeek after Contradictions in it, who will not diſtinguiſh Times, or conſider the different reſpects why things have been ſaid. It is not dangerous to ſuch, who have good deſires, it ought not to be miſtruſted by 'em; it does inlighten 'em, inſtruct 'em, and ſhews 'em the way that leads to Eternal Life. It is impoſſible that He who ſuſpends his Judgment, who is not ſway'd by Paſſion, Cuſtome, or Prejudice, who is only govern'd by Reaſon, and ſeeks after the Truth, ſhould not find it by this way; and thus to ſearch after it, comes from the Spirit of God. What ſhall I ſay more? He muſt not expect to be ſaved, who does not love this Word above all things; and who does not evidence the love he has for it, by frequent reading of it. For many will ſay with their Mouths, they love that which indeed they do not. They in vain pretend to excuſe them-

themſelves, upon the Credit of their Teachers, in ſaying, that 'tis not intelligible by all, that every one expounds it to his own Advantage. If they are to be believ'd, God ſpake to his Children only to deceive 'em, and not to be underſtood by 'em. Thus there is no way left either to read or know any thing. Every paſſage hath its different Senſe, whereupon we muſt refer our ſelves to our Maſters. Even thoſe which ſeem moſt Evident, are moſt obſcure, and oftentimes ſignifie the contrary of what they ſeem to ſignifie. As for Example; when 'tis ſaid, *Thou ſhalt not make to thy ſelf any likeneſs*, *Exod.* 20. verſ. 4. this ſignifies, we muſt fill our Churches with Images: when 'tis ſaid, *Thou ſhalt not bear falſe witneſs againſt thy Neighbour*, *Exod.* 24. 16. by this is meant, thoſe are to be called Hereticks, who embrace no other Religion but what is preſcrib'd by the Word of God. Then when 'tis ſaid, ſpeaking of the Communion, *As often as you ſhall eat of this Bread.* 1 *Cor.* 11.26. The Sence of this is, That you ſhall eat no Bread. And when 'tis ſaid, *Tarry one for another.* 1 Cor. 11. 33. The meaning of this is, That Maſſes ſhall be ſaid without Communicants. And thus of the reſt. They render the Scripture intricate and difficult only, that they may be conſulted as *Oracles*, and their Authority abſolutely depended on.

If

If Philoſophy was ſo neceſſary for men to diſcharge their Duty to God, the mean and ordinary people of the World could never know any thing of it, againſt that place of Scripture, which ſays, *That he hath hid theſe things from the Wiſe and Prudent, and has revealed 'em unto Babes. Matth.* 11. 25. It is not to be hoped, that a well eſtabliſh'd Conference, can either clear or diſſipate this Darkneſs; ſince moſt men deſign only the maintaining the firſt Opinion they have receiv'd, or ſetting a Value and Reputation on their Profeſſion. Diſputes indeed are dangerous, for thoſe who manage 'em ordinarily grow paſſionate and ſharp, or ambitious of Conqueſt; at leaſt, of not being overcome. I have never obſerv'd thoſe of the Church of *Rome* to deal with Sincerity; their Religion has ſo little of Religion in it, that it ſcarce ever ſuffers 'em to act in any thing, without conſulting their Humane Intereſt, or without having ſtudied all manner of Tricks and Cunning: *As the Children of this World are in their Generation wiſer than the Children of light.* Luke 16. 8. They are aſſured of the Victory before the Combat. They are certain they ſhall be countenan'd by thoſe who preſide, and be applauded by the Voice of the Multitude. They are aſſur'd of him on whoſe Account the Diſpute is made, and to have the better by any way whatever, unleſs that of Reaſon.

Other-

Otherwiſe, they amuſe the Standers by, and loſe the time in repeating long Quotations, and will always ſpeak thrice as much at leaſt, as their Adverſaries. They will not diſpute with equal Strength or Arms; they will be both Party and Judges, and pretending a Sovereign Juriſdiction over all things that belong to Religion; will not be determined but by themſelves; they will admit of no Advice, or allow any Councils but what are made up of men all obliged to the ſame Intereſt. They will reſolve nothing but after their own Way, their own Policy, their own Cuſtoms, or Prejudices, which confirm their Errors, inſtead of removing of 'em. But, if they were well aſſur'd that Truth was of their ſide, it being certainly the ſtrongeſt, tho' the leaſt known; yet ought they to be ſo charitable to us, as to ſay, *Aſſemble the learned of your Men together, and we, on our parts, will do the ſame; We'll receive your Reaſons in Writing, ſigned with your hands, and we'll return you ours, with the ſame Freedom.* But theſe Hypocrites, theſe ſelf-intereſſed Men, of ſeared Conſciences, will not run the Riſque of ruining, at once, both their Religion and their Fortunes. 'Tis not their deſign to draw men to their Party by the Power of Truth; they know no way to do it, but by Corruption, by Liberty, and fair Promiſes. They make it their buſineſs to find out, amongſt thoſe of the Reform'd Religion, and eſpecially the

Paſtors,

Paſtors, a *Judas*, who may be prevailed on to ſell himſelf, to betray their Maſter and Brethren. But, to what purpoſe theſe Perſwaſions, or theſe Compulſions? To what end, this Diſpute, or rather, this inſufferable Wrangling? Is it not only to prove to us, that thoſe who proſtrate themſelves before Images are not Idolaters? Is it not to perſwade us to go every day before the Altar, to obſerve the going forward and backward, the Geſtures, the myſterious Ornaments of a Prieſt that turns his Back upon us, and to oblige the People to ſay *Amen*, to ſeveral repeated Words and murmuring Noiſe of a Tongue, which for the moſt part, they underſtand not. 'Tis for this they make ſo much Diſorder in the World; 'tis for this they promiſe, they threaten, and perſecute the Saints even to over-come 'em, as far as 'tis poſſible for 'em, and make the very Stars fall from Heaven. 'Tis this which does afflict us, and this which does often amaze us. 'Tis this would make us ſink under our Fear and Sorrows: but on this account, the Holy Trinity comes to our Aſſiſtance, the Holy Ghoſt does comfort, and withal aſſure us, *That the Son ſhall not loſe one of thoſe whom the Father has given him. Joh.* 17. 12. and 18. 9. Moreover, Providence and Truth, are ſo glorioufly triumphant over their Enemies, that they find themſelves caught in thoſe Snares they laid for others.

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Whoever ſhall attentively read the Books of Controverſie, ſo refin'd as they are at this Time, will perceive, that thoſe of the Reform'd Religion do apparently ſurpaſs all others; and that there are only ſuch who are contentious, ſtupid, or harden'd, and given up even to a reprobate Senſe, that receive not from 'em as full Satisfaction as Reaſon it ſelf can offer.

To conclude, *Ariſtander*, I am forc'd to tell you, that I find not ſo much as one remaining Spark of the pure Goſpel, any ſhadow of true Chriſtianity, in all this *Roman* Hierarchy. 'Tis a Body labouring under an irrecoverable Leproſie; an Hydropick Body, puffed up with it's ill Humours. 'Tis ſick of a Lethargy that ſleeps the Sleep of Death, from which, no Voice is ſtrong or loud enough to awaken it. On the contrary, I am fully ſatisfy'd with the Profeſſion of the Reformed Churches, which inſtruct me in the Divine Commands, without any Mixture of Humane Inventions. I find there preached, the pure and plain Truth of a *Jeſus Chriſt crucified*; 1 *Cor.* 2. 2. *who brings healing under his Wings*, *Mal.* 4. 2. *who makes the Deaf to hear*, *and the Blind to ſee*; and in a Word, even *the Dead to riſe again*, *Matt.* 11. 5. to enjoy the for-ever-bleſſed Life of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghoſt, who lives and reigns eternally. *Amen.*

A LET-

A LETTER to a Lord at Court, who would have perſwaded him to turn *Catholick*.

MY LORD,

SInce the Care you are pleas'd to have of me in all my Concerns, extends it ſelf even to the Salvation of my Soul, I humbly beg your Lordſhips leave to give you my Opinion on this Subject; and 'twould be an extreme Pleaſure to me, was it not contrary to yours. 'Tis not without Aſtoniſhment that I have obſerv'd in the World ſo many different Religions, which are all maintain'd by their Patrons, with an equal Poſitiveneſs, one believing he has as much Reaſon on his ſide as the other. But 'twas yet greater Amazement to me, to ſee that God does ſo manifeſtly make himſelf known to men that will not liſten to him, and who are ſo obdurate, not to meditate either on what they hear or read, and perceive not what they even ſee. I can hardly look on thoſe without Contempt, or Indignation, who have no Religion but from their Education, or Chance, on whom Cuſtom is abundantly more prevalent than Reaſon it ſelf. They lazily adhere to what they firſt meet with, and, betraying themſelves, dread nothing more than to know the Truth, for fear of being

being oblig'd to embrace it. I believ'd then, my Lord, that to preſerve our ſelves from theſe Errors, 'twas highly neceſſary to have recourſe to Principles; and therefore I diligently ſearch'd the Scriptures, which are ſaid, and with reaſon, to be *Divinely inſpir'd*, 2 *Tim.* 3. 16. and in which are found *the Words of Eternal life*, *John* 6. 68. From hence I firſt learn'd, that God would be acknowledg'd the ſole Author, as well as the only Object of Religion; and that he is ſo jealous of his Commandments, that whoever preſumes to add to, or retrench from 'em, is guilty of Sacrilege. Theſe Holy Oracles, by ſo many evident Proofs, confirm the Faith of the Goſpel, and the Truth of Chriſtianity, that 'tis impoſſible for any one, unleſs ſtupid, or hardned in Wickedneſs, to doubt of 'em. The beſt things that have been ſaid by Philoſophers are here urg'd, with more Power and Efficacy; There is nothing wanting in 'em, either for regulating our Manners, or the Worſhip of God, or the Comfort of our Souls. But in theſe we find not any of thoſe new words, which 'twas neceſſary to invent to expreſs their new Doctrines. Theſe acquaint us with what is ſufficient to know of our Sovereign Good, and what they declare not, was not neceſſary to be ſaid. We muſt not imagine that they are to be interpreted as we pleaſe. They are ſufficiently explain'd by themſelves, to be underſtood by thoſe

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who ſincerely deſire it, and perfectly to inform 'em of what true Chriſtians ought not to be ignorant of. If the Myſteries in 'em are obſcure, the Precepts are clear, but neither the Darkneſs of the one, or the Clearneſs of the other, allow men to contribute any thing to 'em, but their Obedience. I read 'em then, *My Lord*, not out of bare Curioſity, with deſign to contradict 'em, or that I may be look'd on as more learned by it; but that I may enjoy the Comforts of this preſent Life, and acquaint my ſelf with thoſe of a future. I diſpute not of Grace, but earneſtly ask it. I dive not into the Secret of Predeſtination, but I look after, and endeavour all poſſible ways to find my ſelf concern'd in it. I don't believe that God is obliged to give me an Account of what he is pleas'd to do from his Juſtice or his Mercy. All theſe nice Queſtions belong to the Great Doctors of the Age, who allow themſelves this Priviledge; who ſo much abound in their own Senſe, and who are ſo full of Pride and Preſumption, that they will not humble themſelves even at the Voice of the Almighty; to which, would they yield that reſpect and Submiſſion as they ought, was of it ſelf alone, ſufficient to reconcile all the Differences of the World.

The Impreſſions which the Word of God makes on thoſe who read it with Care and Attention, do enlighten 'em to diſtinguiſh be-

between the true Religion and the falſe, and to reject all thoſe Traditions which are not coherent with its Doctrine, or confirm'd by its Authority. Who doubts but that the Primitive Chriſtians, the more calmly to introduce themſelves in the World, have been forc'd to allow of many things, which have been made uſe of as degrees to Superſtition, and which at length have been eſtabliſh'd as inviolable Laws? Men have been always vain in their imaginations; have *ſought out many inventions*, *Eccl.* 7. 29. and I know not by what *Science*, *falſly ſo called*, 1 *Tim.* 6. 20. have fram'd to themſelves ſome fantaſtick Chimera's and Notions, which they have plac'd in the room of Truth. They can't reliſh the wholeſome Doctrine, they deſire ſomething to pleaſe the eye, they entertain themſelves with colours, and ſounds, or with ſome myſterious Appearances, the ſubject of their Admiration and Amazement. The plainneſs of the Goſpel ſuits well with their temper; they are ſo far from following the ſteps of our Saviour, to *go forth from the Camp bearing his Reproach*, *Heb.* 13. 13. that they will admit of no Religion, but what is glorious and ſplendid, and conſequently of none but what is conformable to the Kingdom of this World. They have their Religious men, and what is worſe, Women too, who look askew on thoſe that believe not as they do, and who on the credit of ſome Impoſtor, or on the teſtimony

of one Party alone, condemn the other to forfeit all his Happineſs. They often put me in mind of thoſe honourable Women who did ſo perſecute thoſe two Apoſtles, St. *Paul* and St. *Barnabas*, and were never at eaſe till they had forc'd 'em out of *Antioch*. Obſerve then, How not only vain and uſeleſs Devotion is, but pernicious too, when it is not inſpir'd by the Spirit of Diſcretion, or the Knowledge of the Truth. Many of 'em impoſe on themſelves Laws which God never inſtituted, and are as thoſe concerning which 'tis ſaid, *Who hath required this at your hands? Iſa.* 1.12. From hence have the People been corrupted, become Superſtitious, and from Superſtition proceeded to Idolatry. 'Tis from hence ſo many Judgments remain yet amongſt us, from hence is God's Anger kindled againſt men; from hence are they provok'd one againſt another; and to compleat their miſery, 'tis from hence they rather harden their hearts than ſtrive to reform 'em.

For my part, my Lord, I joyn with thoſe who conſtantly adhere to the Scriptures, who turn not from 'em either to the right hand, or to the left, who exhort us to the reading of 'em, and who deſire their Sermons may be try'd by this Touch-ſtone. When we ſee 'em deal thus fairly, I cannot doubt but that their Calling is lawful, and that they make a part of the Univerſal Church. But I beware, as much as 'tis poſſible for me, o

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the Leaven of the Pharisees of the Age, who would have the Ordinances of men be equal to those of Divine Institution, whose Religion is but a Pretence to make 'em the more easily procure what their Ambition or Avarice prompt 'em to. I confess I can't but wonder that they reflect not on those words of Jesus Christ; *But in vain do they worship me, teaching for Doctrines the Commandements of men, Matth.* 15. 9. and that they believe not that many, even when they design to Honour, displease him. Who are these men? Not Kings, Nobles, or Magistrates, that are intrusted with the management of Temporal things; it must be those then who are charged with the government of Spiritual ones, who abusing the credulity of the People, and the name of God himself, make themselves obey'd even as God. I am amaz'd that what he says in another place so expressly against the Wise and Learned men of the World, does not terrifie 'em, and oblige 'em to quit their own Doctrine. But they think so arrogantly of themselves, that they look on those with pity, not to say rage, who dare contradict 'em, or in the least doubt of their Infallibility. Yet, as a just punishment on 'em, they are so blinded, as to be ignorant of, and suffer others to be so too, what it has pleas'd God *to reveal unto Babes, Matth.* 11. 25. to the confounding of the greatest part of the *Mighty*, of the *Noble*, and the Learned themselves,

ſelves, 1 *Cor.* 1. 26. All ſorts of Reaſon teaches us, that he ſpake only to be underſtood, that he caus'd his Word to be written that it might be read, and hid it not but from thoſe who are loſt. If he condemns a wilful and brutiſh Ignorance, he diſapproves of a haughty and vain Knowledge, the Spring from whence ariſe ſo many Diſputes, which do infinitely more hurt than good, and which maintain not ſo much the Truth, as the firſt received Opinion. He believes, He follows Chriſt who perſecutes him; He believes himſelf of the number of the Faithful, whoſe whole Faith conſiſts but in an indiſcreet Zeal, in the ſtrength of Errour, and in being poſitive and obdurate. The men of the Age acquaint not themſelves with this Truth, or if they do, 'tis from thoſe of their own party, who confirm 'em in their belief, and neither the one or the other allow of any Religion which agrees not with their Conveniencies. If any of 'em have a ſenſe of their Diſeaſe, it is agreeable to 'em, they take ſuch pleaſure in it, that they'l not endeavour after any cure. But to conclude all, I will maintain, that men have no ſurer ſign of their Election, than their love of the Word of God; and that thoſe ſhall not be ſaved who have not loved it more than Honour, Riches, and the moſt amiable things in the World.

A LETTER to an Officer of the Crown that often diſcours'd to him of Religion.

MY LORD,

WHEN Your Lordſhip does me the Honour to diſcourſe to me of Religion, my Reſpect will not give me leave to anſwer you, but only to liſten to you: yet, if I am longer ſilent, I fear you may judge me inſenſible of what I have the moſt lively Senſe. 'Tis this makes me take the Confidence of entertaining Your Lordſhip with a few Lines concerning my Belief, and not without wonder, that others are not of the ſame Opinion with me. As ſoon as my Senſe and Reaſon began to be ſerviceable to me, I with great Care and Diligence ſearch'd the Holy Scriptures; and I have no other Religion but what I learn'd from thence. I never believed that ſome dark and abſtruſe Paſſages were contrary to others that were clear and evident; and I have found moſt of 'em ſufficiently plain, fully to inform me of what I ought to believe. I never thought that God would ſpeak to his Children only to deceive 'em, or not to be underſtood by 'em. Thoſe who have good Inclinations, never read the Scriptures but they profit by 'em. If thoſe whom Curioſity (it may be) has invited once to read 'em, don't continually perſevere in doing

doing ſo, 'tis a ſhrewd Sign, they have had no Operation on 'em. 'Tis not the meek or humble, the plain men of the World, or even the ignorant, that promote Hereſies; thoſe who do this, and then maintain 'em, muſt be both malicious and learned too. 'Twas no diſheartening to me to ſee the true Profeſſors of the Goſpel bear a certain Character that made the World deſpiſe 'em, and they the World. They are dejected, as if out of their Element, and did but out of Complaiſance participate of others Joys. Above all, in the Exerciſe of their Religion, they abhor all manner of Superſtition, and believe that 'tis an Abuſe and a high Crime, to mix the Inventions of men with the Ordinances of God. If our good Intentions were capable of making our Vows and Offerings equally acceptable, all Religions would be good ones: But, the *Jealouſie of the Eternal, Exod.* 20. 5. will not ſuffer us to profane holy Things, or ſanctifie profane ones; or, to ſpeak yet more fully, to conſecrate Sacriledges. Let the moſt rational men read and read again the Scriptures, and let 'em frame a Religion according to the Rules they preſcribe, *without preſuming beyond what is written*, 1 *Cor.* 4 6. and I am confident, they cannot make any other than that which I profeſs, and, by the Grace of God, will do the ſame all my Life.

A LET-

A LETTER to *Monſieur de la Militiere*, who begged his Opinion in Writing, upon the Books of Controverſie he had made.

SIR,

I Don't pretend to anſwer in one Letter, ſo many Books which your Revolt has occaſion'd you to write in Oppoſition to that Religion you have forſaken, and in the Defence of that you have cloſed with. I muſt only ſay, I could never, with all the Senſe and Reaſon Heaven has been pleas'd to beſtow on me, reconcile what I ſee in the Church of *Rome*, to what I read in the Holy Scriptures. I have ever conſulted both Parties, I have read the Writings both of the one and the other, that I might the better know 'em by their Words and their Actions. But, I find that your Doctors ſerve themſelves of too much Art and Cunning, to be believ'd; their Divinity is ſo refin'd, that they undo themſelves by their own Subtilty. They mix with it I know not what Leaven, of which our Saviour bids us beware, and which indeed has not the taſte of true Bread, or the heavenly *Manna*. Thoſe of the Reform'd Religion, on the contrary, act with greater Sincerity, adhere to the Rule of the Scriptures, which do more en-

lighten our Underſtandings, and give greater Tranquillity to our Minds.

Let who pleaſe imagine he has clearer Illuminations than I have, ſuch as I have, I find in their Doctrine as full Satisfaction as a reaſonable Soul can wiſh for in the Search of the Truth. Why then all this Controverſie? If we have never ſo little Knowledge of the Will of God, or how jealous he is of his Commandments, we cannot ſee the Church of *Rome* without condemning it. We are extreamly in the Wrong, to call thoſe Chriſtians, who have no ſign of true Chriſtianity, who ſpeak not in the ſtyle of Jeſus Chriſt or the Goſpel, to whom the Words of Eternal Life are ſtrange and uncouth. If we miſtake any one Word in their Hearing, 'tis enough to make us pronounc'd Hereticks; they look a skew on us, and 'tis very likely, we ſhall paſs for Strangers even in our own Country. Inſtead of this, they diſcourſe only of the Prayer-book of our Lady, and the Office of the Bleſſed Virgin, of their praying by Beads, of their devoting themſelves to St. *Francis*, or St. *Roch*; and thoſe defective Inſtructions ſhew that thoſe who inſtruct them thus muſt needs be very bad Maſters. What, Sir, would you have me go, and whither would you have me go? Can I look on thoſe People without Pitty, who know not what they ſay when they either pray or ſing? But, above all,

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Can I ſee ſo many poor miſerable Women, who have never done, and who believe God is only pleas'd with Numbers and Repetitions? Can I, without Horror, take Notice of their Beads and Altars, dedicated to any other than the Holy of Holies, where the Creature is placed in the Room of the Creator? Can I ſee on the high Altar that which is called the Bleſſed Sacrament, an ineffectual Object, an inſignificant Sign, Bread which is neither broke, given, or receiv'd by any one; that repreſents neither the breaking of the Body, or the ſhedding of the Blood of Jeſus Chriſt, and which is nothing leſs than the Sacrament? Would you have me go every day to obſerve ſacrificing Prieſts that cannot tell you themſelves what they ſacrifice, and of the Supper of the Lord, make a Show only? Sometimes, they ſpeak with a loud Voice, and yet not to be underſtood; and ſometimes ſo ſoftly, and pronounce ſuch Myſterious and Sacred Words, that 'tis not permitted to thoſe who are by, tho' never ſo devout, to hear what is ſaid, leſt they prophane it. They turn to the right hand and to the left, in Imitation of what the Heathens called *Vertigines*, and from whence, they expect to procure ſome efficacious and admirable Vertue. This is the higheſt pitch of Superſtition; They elevate what they hold in their hands, to make it adored; to which, they attribute the

Names of God, of the Hoſt, of the Body o our Lord, and of the Sacrament; and al theſe, if we may believe them, are conſiſtent together, without any Contradiction. Sure theſe Men muſt be of a very eaſie Belief, to imagine, that that which they make with their own hands, and which they conſecrate, ſhould be made the God who made them? Then not conſidering that the Supper ought to be a common Meal, and therefore muſt have Company at it, or without having Conſideration of that Paſſage, which ſays, *Stay one for another*, the Prieſt, for the moſt part, eats alone, and ſometimes, gives it only to ſome particular Perſon; which, from Abuſe and Cuſtom, they forbear not to call the Communion. What is yet worſe, the taking away of the Cup; which cannot, upon any Account, more at one time than another, be juſtified, and that evident Reaſon of it's Concomitancy, tacitly accuſe our Saviour of not having well thought what he did, do correct, or rather violate his Ordinance, and ſo add Sacriledge to Blaſphemy. Moreover, thoſe who have but an ordinary Tincture of Humane Learning, very well know from what Invention, from what Source have flow'd their Holy Waters, ſome fix'd, others running, or carryed about. Their Enſignes, their lighted Tapers at Noon-day, their Images of Saints, I had almoſt ſaid Gods. To conclude, all their Feaſts,

Feasts, their Processions, their shorn crown'd Heads, their pontifical Ornaments, their pompous Ceremonies, that make the Cross of Jesus Christ of no effect, do sufficiently of themselves prove, that they preserve nothing of the Plainness or Simplicity of the Gospel. The principal Heads of the Church of *Rome* (in this truly Universal) have been afraid to omit any one single Act of the Religions of this World, as if God needed to borrow even from his Enemies, new Inventions, or other Methods to procure greater Honour to himself. Thus Paganism is not quite abolish'd, and we may say, that there are yet such Remains of Superstition and Idolatry, that the Heathens even now do triumph, in some Measure, over the Christians. Here we find nothing pure or compleat, nothing that bears any Marks of the first Institution, every thing is chang'd and corrupted; and, to use their own terms, there seems to have been in all things, a universal Transubstantiation. But, what would become of the *Mystery of Iniquity, that was set on Work from the time of St.* Paul. 2 *Thess.* 2. 7. and by what would Believers know it, if it had not the Marks of Infidels? All these Alterations have come to pass for the Promotion of that Kingdom, or rather that King, who advances himself above all others, and who only use the Name of God to authorize his own Laws against those of God himself.

'Tis

'Tis with the Head of this Church as with the Church he governs; 'tis but warily obſerving him, and we may be undeceiv'd. He is elected only by political Intrigues and Briberies, and his Government is but a Trade; for, under it Sins are taxed, and Pardons to be ſold. He ſets himſelf up as the abſolute Judge of Divine, as well as Humane things, of the Living as the Dead, and diſpoſes even as he pleaſes, of our very Souls, ſending ſome to Hell, and others to Paradiſe. He beſtows on ſome Eccleſiaſticks in great Employments, Titles of Vanity and Pride, and canonizes only ſuch who defend his Tyranny and Uſurpation. What a Succeſſor is this of St. *Peter?* How does he imitate Jeſus Chriſt? What a Vicar is he, to ſubvert all the Orders of his Lord, and who turns his Poverty, his Humility, and Sufferings, into Riches, Pomp, and Pleaſures? Yet, he has the Multitude on his ſide, the Arm of Fleſh; and for a Time, he is even impower'd to contend againſt the Saints and overcome 'em. Theſe are Ills ſcarce to be remedy'd, becauſe eſteem'd Vertues, and in which, many find all the Conveniences imaginable. With theſe, are Hypocrites, the Ambitious and Covetous, pleas'd, and all ſuch who are byaſs'd by Intereſt. Theſe are agreeable to the timerous, the weak, the brutiſh, the ſtupid, and to all thoſe who are harden'd by Cuſtom. The Antiquity of theſe Errors is ſufficient to make 'em valu'd as Sacred Laws, in the

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Opinion of the Vulgar. Even many of the Fathers, by ſuiting themſelves too much to the preſent time, and not fore-ſeeing what might come to paſs, have confirm'd 'em by conniving at 'em. To cite their Teſtimony on this Account, is not to defend our own Cauſe, but accuſe theirs; 'tis to have Recourſe to Authority for want of Reaſon. They themſelves own that they are not infallible, and in this matter, that their beſt Thoughts are very imperfect, if not altogether conſonant to the Scripture. The Doctrine of the true Church is purely Canonical & Divine, and not to be authoriz'd by that which is not ſo. Theſe famous Preachers, which you deſire ſo much I ſhould hear, are Acceſſories to all theſe Abuſes, and deal very unfairly, unleſs they undeceive the People. There is no Religion but may be eloquently diſcour[illegible]; nay, there are thoſe which preach up Mo[illegible]y admirably well, but we may ſay of Eloquence, as of Beauty, that 'tis a gift of Heaven, beſtow'd as well on the Wicked as the Good. The Buſineſs of the greateſt part of 'em is indeed to ſet forth themſelves, and to procure ſome ſpiritual Preferments which now exceed the Se[illegible]lar. Is it to preach Jeſus Chriſt, to conceal the [illegible]t important and chief part of his Commands? They freely enlarge themſelves in diſcourſing on the Precepts of the *Second Table*, but fear nothing more than ſaying the leaſt that can be on the *Firſt*, which does alone ſanctifie all our Devotion, and without which, 'tis impoſſible to pleaſe God. Inſtead of exhorting their

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Hearers to read the Scriptures, they do all that lies in their Power to make 'em miſtruſted, ſometimes accuſing 'em of being imperfect, and at others, of Obſcurity. As if God, the ſole Author of Religion, had commanded us to do our Duties but by halfs, and had ſpake to us that he might not be underſtood. Sure, Sir, thoſe who talk at this Rate, do but deride their Hearers, and have not a mind to be believed. For my part, I am ſo much perſwaded, that what is evident and clear in the Word of God, is ſufficient fully to inform me in the Methods of Salvation, that I boldly declare, if I cannot attain it by theſe, I will not endeavour after it. In a few Words, I adhere with all my Heart to the Creed, I am obedient, as far as 'tis poſſible for me, to the Ten Commandments, I pray as our Saviour himſelf has taught me, and receive the Sacraments of Baptiſm, and the Lord's Supper after that manner which he himſelf has inſtituted 'em. This being the Summary, not only of the Law but of Faith alſo, a Collection of the very Life of the Scriptures, to be of this Belief, and to aſſemble our ſelves with thoſe who make the ſame Profeſſion, is indeed to be in the Church.

A LET-

A LETTER to a Lady who endeavour'd to prevail on him to go hear ſome of the Famous Preachers of the *Roman Church.*

YOU have often preſs'd me, *Stephanie*, to go hear the moſt excellent, at leaſt ſuch who are moſt eſteem'd amongſt your Preachers: And you now oblige me to tell you what I wiſh I could paſs by in ſilence. But your abſolute commands are laid on me to give you my judgment of 'em, and I ſhall then have done it, when I have aſſur'd you only that I find in 'em what has been foretold of 'em, That their Diſcourſes would be florid and ſublime; That they would publiſh great and wonderful Things. But I foreſaw that this would not ſatisfie you, and that it was neceſſary for me to deliver my Opinion yet more fully, altho' abſolutely contrary to yours. I muſt freely confeſs to you, that I never go into your Churches without doing violence to my ſelf, or indeed being out of my Element: For, ſince I cannot joyn with 'em in their Religious Exerciſes, I cannot be there without giving or receiving ſome ſort of Scandal. Firſt, I conſider the Place, and the Perſons, and the ſight of each of 'em is equally offenſive to me. I obſerve thoſe who ſing, or who pray, to have little or

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no Underſtanding, and whoſe Stupidity is a juſt Puniſhment on 'em for their blind Obedience to the Commandments of men, and for that religious Veneration they pay to Images, which are exalted where God alone ought to be worſhipped. 'Tis not at all pleaſing to me to ſee the Preacher in his Surplice or Rocket, whiter than Snow, border'd with a rich Lace, ſtarch'd, ſtiffen'd, and ſo ſet out, that he has much ado to go from one ſide of the Pulpit to the other. Theſe things, without doubt, preach already to thoſe who will underſtand. They have all their meaning and Signification. The very Habit of the Biſhop, is a complication of Myſteries, and is not one of the ſhorteſt Lectures of the Schools. 'Tis, it may be, the better to repreſent the Diſgrace and Sufferings of Jeſus Chriſt, and to ſhew, that the Servant is not greater than the Maſter. When I obſerve any of 'em thus ſplendidly attired, I ſay to my ſelf, Nothing will come from him but what is like him; and I expect ſuch, and not fewer Flowers than the Poets have beſtowed on their fabulous *Aurora*. 'Tis true, ſome of 'em do not thus externally adorn themſelves, as not ſuiting with their courſer Ruſſets, or their Vows of Poverty, which will not allow 'em to wear ſuch gay things, however Sacred they may be. Yet, this Vow ſeldom reaches beyond the Garb, and the Language of *Capuchins* and *Recolets*, is not leſs Rhetorical than that of Biſhops and Abbots.

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However, they all begin after the ſame manner, by making a Sign of a Croſs, of Humane and Superſtitious Invention, which they preſumptuouſly apply to the three Perſons of the God-head; by which, as I believe, they pretend to draw a Bleſſing on themſelves and their Preaching. By a like Abuſe, they name their Text in *Latin*, the Repetition of which, many of 'em affect in the ſeveral parts of their Sermons. And I cann't imagine, why they ſet a greater Value on the Ancient Language of Popes, than on that of Jeſus Chriſt, the Prophets and Apoſtles, in which, things were at firſt writ or declar'd. This is but a falſe Luſtre, by which they make their Diſcourſes more florid, ſince they are preſently forc'd to pronounce it in a known Tongue, and to explain it. 'Tis but a ſtrange Noiſe with which they would ſurprize the People, and make that paſs for ſome great Myſtery, which is indeed but a ridiculous Superfluity. Then do they begin with a Preface, not leſs artificial, myſterious, or allegorial than the reſt, as a Pattern of what follows, which they be ſure fail not to conſecrate with an *Ave-Maria*. Here I find my ſelf extreamly diſturb'd; I who believe all Religious Worſhip ought to be terminated in the alone Perſons of the Trinity, and that that Honour which is due to them, ought not to be given to any one beſides. If the Bleſſed Virgin does take notice of 'em, and hear what they ſay, 'tis not to be queſtion'd, but that ſhe is highly offended

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at 'em, and that the greateſt kindneſs they can receive from Her is this, that ſhe ſays, after the Example of her Son, *Pardon them, O Lord, they know not what they do*, Luke 23. *v.* 34. and that 'tis anſwer'd. Theſe are the wilfully ignorant; who ought to know it, and who deſerve to be thus harden'd, ſince they are more careful in the obſervation of Traditions, than the Scriptures. As to the Preaching in general, both of the one and the other, tho' the Matter and Form of it may differ, yet they all agree in their firſt ill Principle, and ſet it out with the Name of a Church, which is ſo very convenient for 'em, that they can by no means quit it. Doubt not, *Stephanie*, but that I have with attention heard theſe famous Preachers, who are follow'd by ſo many, who are admir'd by the Nobility, and approv'd of by the Learned themſelves. I have indeed found that they had knowledge and eloquence, and many other natural Gifts which indifferently happen to the Bad men of the World, as well as the Good. Nay, I have obſerv'd in the Faces of ſome the marks of Holineſs, whoſe Diſcourſe was ready to have deceived me, and poſſeſs'd me with a good Opinion of their Belief, if, either a little before, or preſently after, I had not diſcover'd their being, as it were, poyſon'd with unhappy Traditions, that did not at all ſavour of the Purity of

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the Gospel. These Wise men have put me often in mind of those Fools, who after having for some time discours'd very seriously, could not forbear returning to their first Folly. Here is I know not what mixture of good and bad things, I know not what Mysteries, of which they have some sort of Conception, but cannot express. Here are discover'd those Tares the Devil sowed in the Church, that Leaven of the Pharisees, the poyson of Humane Inventions, which make us now say, what the Sons of the Prophets did in the time of *Elisha*, *There is Death in the Pot*, 2 *Kings* 4. *v.* 40. They all equally betray God's Cause, their designs being only to preach up themselves; and proceeding from a wilfull Blindness, to the efficacy of Errour, at length come to believe what they endeavour to make others do. They pretend truly to preach Jesus Christ crucify'd, that it may be said they preach him, that his Name may be made use of to their praise, and set a greater Reputation on their Sermons. But they plainly demonstrate they do not absolutely believe in Him, since after this they fail not to preach up a St. *Francis*, a St. *Dominic*, to whom they attribute as much Power, and as many Miracles, as to Jesus Christ himself. The highest Points of their Divinity are grounded more on *Aristotle* than St. *Paul*, and these mighty Defenders of the Christian Faith have no greater

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Maſters than Pagans and Infidels: They make by their Diſcourſes the Simplicity of the Goſpel pompous, and diſguiſe all Plainneſs and Sincerity, ſo that when I have well obſerv'd em, they always appear'd to me ſuch as Huckſters and Mountebanks, which corrupt the Word of God, 2 *Cor.* 2. 17. But if this Compariſon ſeems too injurious to 'em, and that you deſire one more favourable and lofty; I muſt tell you that I place 'em amongſt Angels, but thoſe who bear the name of Wormwood, who make the Waters bitter, and deſtroy a great part of the World, I place 'em amongſt thoſe who are permitted to do Miracles, to ſhake the Powers of Heaven, to make the Stars fall from it, to tempt, to ſeduce, to perplex, as much as 'tis poſſible for 'em, the very Elect. We have had ſo many warnings of theſe things, as if they came to paſs only to make good the Scripture that has foretold 'em. This is the true Lamp that directs us in the Diſcovery of Satan's Character, amidſt ſo much Brightneſs they borrow to dazle us. If we do hear any thing that is pure and holy from 'em, their falſe applying of it, and thoſe ſubalternate ends they ſerve by it, does preſently make their Deſign plain; all their ſeeming Reality does not prevent our eaſie perception of the Myſtery of Iniquity. I don't mean thoſe whom you your ſelf approve not of, whoſe Words and Actions

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are ſo light and extravagant, that their Buſineſs ſeems to be rather the entertaining of their Hearers with ſome pleaſant, diverting Diſcourſe, than the correcting, or inſtructing of 'em; who rather act the part of Comedians, than ſeriouſly do that of Preachers. I don't mean ſuch who ſpend their time in Converſation with the Ladies, who run from Houſe to Houſe ſo much the more eagerly, ſince what they are commanded by God, to be Husbands of one Wife is look'd on as a Crime by 'em, and therefore the more ſtrictly forbid by men. There are none ſet their Affections more on Secular things than theſe Church-men, nor any thoſe of this World more than they who pretend to abandon it.

I know very well, that Biſhops are adviſed to be free and familiar with thoſe they have the Care of; this heretofore ſignified, that they ſhould entertain 'em kindly, viſit 'em upon Occaſion, exhort and comfort 'em. But, now the meaning of it is, That they muſt play with ſome, hunt with others, treat ſplendidly, and keep a Noble Table. In theſe things, the Revenue of ſo many rich Biſhopricks is employ'd, and ſeem to be beſtow'd on many of 'em, that they may the better be enabled to live at Court, whilſt their Flocks know no one ſo little as their Paſtor. Muſt that which is the Art of all

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Arts, the Cure of Souls, the Adminiſtration of holy Things, be now the Profeſſion of the Ambitious, the Prodigal, the Covetous, and ſuch who addict themſelves to Pleaſures. What Edification can we expect from ſuch who aim at nothing but their own Advantage, and preach only, that by that they may riſe to theſe high Preferments they ſo earneſtly covet. The paſſionate Deſire by which you ſo frequently urge me to hear theſe men, puts me in mind of that great Zeal the Wives of *Solomon* had for their falſe Gods, and who were never quiet till they had prevail'd on him to conſent to their Idolatry. You would have me ſubmit my Judgment to that of ſuch numbers of honeſt men, who both approve of, and follow 'em; not conſidering, that the true Miniſters of the Goſpel meet not with ſo much favour from the Princes of the People, or the Multitude. No, no, their ſincere and plain Profeſſion allows 'em not to procure ſo much the Approbation of the World; they ſtick firmly to the true Rule; they expound the Scriptures by themſelves; they intrude not on things they have not ſeen; and, as the Prophets and Apoſtles, deliver not what they have not receiv'd. You here ſee, *Stephanie*, what a too fond Opinion of your own Belief, a no leſs violent than ſuperſtitious Piety, common to the devout Zealous Women of the Times, have pro-

provoked you to make me ſay. 'Tis too ſhort an Anſwer, in Compariſon of what I could have return'd, and it may be longer than what you deſir'd to have had; But, if you cannot conſent to my Opinion, be ſo kind at leaſt, to approve of my Obedience, who aſſure you that I am

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FINIS.